DOMESTIC DRIVERS IN NORTH KOREAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT

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DOMESTIC DRIVERS IN NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT

by

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The prevailing explanation today claims that security concerns motivate North Korea to develop nuclear weapons and that the motivation would decrease if the concerns diminish. Nevertheless, given that the international community since the 1990s has failed to prevent North Korea from securing nuclear weapons, questions arise as to whether it properly identified North Korea's motivations and whether those motivations remained unchanged. In this respect, this thesis investigates the question: "Historically, to what extent have domestic political concerns been a driver for North Korea in deciding on its nuclear weapons program?" The thesis argues that domestic politics became the prevailing motivation for the program from 1994 to 2009. The security perspective explains that Kim Jong-il, who monopolized power, behaved on behalf of national interests, and that the growing South Korean military capabilities and U.S. hardline policy motivated him to develop nuclear weapons. Yet, many of Kim Jong-il's actions in this period did not coincide with national security preservation. In this regard, the domestic political perspective explains that his domestic political interests motivated him to develop nuclear weapons and that he used the program as a source of money and useful pretext for legitimizing his regime. Especially, North Korea's response to the U.S. sanctions on the Banco Delta Asia shows that Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests were the prevailing driver for the program.

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DOMESTIC DRIVERS IN NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The prevailing explanation today claims that security concerns motivate North Korea to develop nuclear weapons and that the motivation would decrease if the concerns diminish. Nevertheless, given that the international community since the 1990s has failed to prevent North Korea from securing nuclear weapons, questions arise as to whether it properly identified North Korea's motivations and whether those motivations remained unchanged. In this respect, this thesis investigates the question: "Historically, to what extent have domestic political concerns been a driver for North Korea in deciding on its nuclear weapons program?" The thesis argues that domestic politics became the prevailing motivation for the program from 1994 to 2009. The security perspective explains that Kim Jong-il, who monopolized power, behaved on behalf of national interests, and that the growing South Korean military capabilities and U.S. hardline policy motivated him to develop nuclear weapons. Yet, many of Kim Jong-il's actions in this period did not coincide with national security preservation. In this regard, the domestic political perspective explains that his domestic political interests motivated him to develop nuclear weapons and that he used the program as a source of money and useful pretext for legitimizing his regime. Especially, North Korea's response to the U.S. sanctions on the Banco Delta Asia shows that Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests were the prevailing driver for the program.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BDA	Banco Delta Asia
BPM	Bureaucratic Politics Model
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FLPH	Foreign Language Publishing House
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEU	Highly Enriched Uranium
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
KIDA	Korea Institute for Defense Analysis
KPA	Korean People's Army
KWP	Korean Workers Party
MPS	Ministry of People's Security
MND	Ministry of National Defense
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NDC	National Defense Commission
NKWG	North Korea Working Group
NPT	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Organizational Process Model
PAF	People's Armed Forces
PDC	Pyongyang Defense Command
RAM	Rational Actor Model
SFS	Situation Force Scoring
SPA	Supreme People's Assembly
SSD	State Security Department
UN	United Nations

WFP	World Food Programme

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis will investigate the question: "Historically, to what extent have domestic political concerns been a driver for North Korea in deciding on its nuclear weapons program?" Many researchers have studied a state's motivations for developing nuclear weapons, and they agree that concerns for security and domestic politics are two major motivations.[1] Along with other scholars, Scott Sagan presents three models—security, domestic politics, and norms—as the three major categories to explain a state's motivations to build nuclear weapons. Based on Sagan's classifications, this thesis investigates a conventional premise that North Korea's concerns for its security have been the most important driver for developing nuclear weapons.[2]

To be specific, this thesis tests a hypothesis that the conventional premise is applicable before the 1990s, but that, due to the collapse of communist countries, the death of Kim Il-sung, and natural disasters, for the ensuing two decades North Korea needed to strengthen its internal solidarity more so than to concentrate on its security against foreign threats. In other words, this thesis aims to determine more precisely to what extent North Korea's most important motivation for developing nuclear weapons changed from security

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[1] Joseph Cirincione, *Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 49; Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell Reiss, eds., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 20; Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996): 55, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539273.

[2] Bradley A. Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," *Security Studies* 4, no. 3 (1995): 496, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419509347592; Christopher W. Hughes, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Implications for the Nuclear Ambitions of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan," *Asia Policy* 3, no. 1 (2007): 82, https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2007.0000; Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, *North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation*, CRS Report No. R41259 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018), 10, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41259/43; Selig S. Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea: How Real a Threat?," *World Policy Journal* 17, no. 3 (2000): 23, https://doi.org/10.1215/07402775-2000-4001; Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996): 85, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539273; Siegfried S. Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," *Daedalus* 139, no. 1 (2010): 48, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed.2010.139.1.44; Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, "The Debate over North Korea," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2004): 232, https://doi.org/10.2307/20202344.

concerns to domestic politics in the period of the Agreed Framework and the Six Party Talks—1994 to 2009.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The fact that the international community consequently failed to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons raises some questions. Because the prevailing explanation in the 1990s claimed that North Korea's security concerns motivated it to develop nuclear weapons, many researchers thought that North Korea's motivation would decrease if its security concerns diminished.[3] As a result, at the time of the Six Party Talks, the most basic task of the talks was to guarantee the security of North Korea.[4] Nevertheless, given that the international community subsequently failed to prevent North Korea from securing nuclear weapons, questions arise as to whether the international community properly identified North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons and whether those motivations remained unchanged over time.

Thus, this thesis also aims to provide a broader understanding of how concerns for domestic politics influenced North Korea's decision making on its nuclear weapons program from 1994 to 2009. The thesis analyzes North Korea's motives for developing

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[3] Gu Guoliang, "Redefine Cooperative Security, Not Preemption," *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2003): 141, https://doi.org/10.1162/01636600360569748; Hazel Smith, *North Korea: Markets and Military Rule* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 311; James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen, "How to Deal with North Korea," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 2 (2003): 19, https://doi.org/10.2307/20033501; Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers - Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 254; Selig S. Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea," *World Policy Journal* 17, no. 3 (2000): 23. At the end of the Six Party Talks, however, interest in the security guarantee declined as there was no progress on denuclearization of North Korea despite efforts made so far. See Andrei Lankov, "Staying Alive: Why North Korea Will Not Change," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 2 (2008): 15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/ 20032577; Victor D. Cha, "What Do They Really Want?: Obama's North Korea Conundrum." *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2009): 120. https://doi.org/10.1080/01636600903224837.

[4] Christopher R. Hill, "U.S. Opening Statement at the Fourth Round of Six Party Talks," U.S. Department of State, last modified July 26, 2005, https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2005/50510.htm; "Six-Point Consensus Reached at Six Party Talks: Chinese Vice FM," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, Aug 29, 2003, http://www.chinaun.org/eng/hyyfy/t29001.htm. At the time of the Agreed Framework, North Korea explained that its nuclear program was aimed at compensating for energy scarcity. Accordingly, the focus of the Agreed Framework was to disable North Korea's nuclear weapons development capabilities by providing proliferation-resistant light water reactors and energy aid as North Korea did not recognize its development of nuclear weapons. See Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, New ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 327–328.

nuclear weapons, targeting the period from the Agreed Framework to the Six Party Talks, based on North Korean domestic political changes. This period was important in terms of domestic politics in that Kim Il-sung's dictatorship, which had continued for at least 44 years, ended, and Kim Jong-il succeeded him and maintained the regime. Also, in this period, North Korea advanced its nuclear program by extracting plutonium from spent fuel, pursuing uranium enrichment, expanding its missile program, withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), and conducting two nuclear tests.[5] In this regard, this thesis attempts to help us understand how domestic political motives played a role in North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons at the time, by examining correlations between the domestic political environment and the advance of its nuclear program. In so doing, this thesis will improve scholars' analytic capacity to evaluate the roles of different motivations in current and future North Korean behavior as well, thereby also providing a stronger foundation for policymaking.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review presents insight into areas of prior research relevant to this thesis. First, it discusses the current understanding of the motivations for a state to acquire nuclear weapons. Then, it examines interpretations of North Korean nuclear motivations. Lastly, it analyzes the characteristics of North Korean domestic politics during the target period of this study.

1. Motivations for Proliferation

Research on a state's motivations for developing nuclear weapons commonly explains that concerns related to security and domestic politics are two important categories. First of all, there is a certain degree of consensus among researchers that security concerns are the most important factor influencing a state to develop nuclear weapons. Kurt Campbell suggests five major motivations for a state to develop nuclear weapons, and two of those five are related to security: "a change in the direction of U.S.

[5] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 46–47.

foreign and security policy" in particular and "the erosion of regional or global security."[6] Also, Campbell argues that "the question of the future direction of U.S. foreign and security policy" is an important motivator for a state to acquire nuclear weapons.[7]

In addition, various theorists describe how, based on the international relations theory of neorealism, concerns for security serve as the most significant driver for a state to develop nuclear weapons. For example, Stephen Walt observes that from the perspective of neorealism, in the anarchic international system where there is no "central authority to protect states from one another," states seek to survive.[8] Based on this idea, Joseph Cirincione discusses how, in this view, concern for security "remains the leading explanation for nuclear proliferation."[9] Cirincione explains that in this view, each state seeks to develop nuclear weapons to survive in "the Hobbesian jungle" because nuclear weapons can guarantee absolute security.[10] Scott D. Sagan observes how concerns for security can explain the largest number of proliferation cases.[11] He explains that the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons can encourage a state to develop nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence to ensure its own sovereignty and security.[12]

Next, there is a consensus among these researchers that domestic politics is another major driver for developing nuclear weapons. Kurt Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell Reiss demonstrate that nuclear weapons development can be determined by "domestic imperatives" such as domestic political upheaval or bureaucratic politics.[13] To be specific, this work explains that declining states may select cost-effective options, including nuclear weapons, to prevent social unrest arising from economic and security

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[6] Campbell, Einhorn, and Reiss, *The Nuclear Tipping Point*, 20–28.

[7] Campbell, Einhorn, and Reiss, 20.

[8] Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (1998): 31, https://doi.org/10.2307/1149275.

[9] Cirincione, *Bomb Scare*, 51.

[10] Cirincione, 51.

[11] Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 85.

[12] Sagan, 57.

[13] Campbell, Einhorn, and Reiss, *The Nuclear Tipping Point*, 27–28.

grievances.[14] Cirincione also sees how bureaucratic actors may play roles in the policy-making process.[15] In other words, he explains that in a policy-making process of developing nuclear weapons, scientists, soldiers, and political leaders pursue their personal or organizational interests, and ultimately, these private interests affect a decision to develop nuclear weapons.[16] Finally, Sagan demonstrates that a state's decision on nuclear weapons development can also be influenced by political interests or parochial culture of particular groups rather than based on their national interests.[17]

Also, these researchers agree that motivations—including concerns related to security and domestic politics—work together in various ways according to unique internal and external circumstances that each proliferator encounters in the process of developing nuclear weapons. Campbell explains that, under several circumstances, diverse motivations are accumulated in various forms and reinforce each other, and the results affect the decision making of nuclear weapons development.[18] Cirincione also discusses mixed motivations and explains that it is difficult to clearly distinguish how various motivations work together in deciding to develop nuclear weapons under various circumstances.[19] Sagan, in particular, describes this mix of motivations in the process of developing nuclear weapons as "multicausality."[20] He demonstrates that "[n]uclear weapons proliferation and nuclear restraint have occurred in the past and can occur in the future, for more than one reason."[21] Also, Sagan explains that the interpretations of motivations for nuclear weapons development may vary depending on historical situations.[22]

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[14] Campbell, Einhorn, and Reiss, 27.

[15] Cirincione, *Bomb Scare*, 63.

[16] Cirincione, 63–66.

[17] Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 63–64.

[18] Campbell, Einhorn, and Reiss, *The Nuclear Tipping Point*, 20.

[19] Cirincione, *Bomb Scare*, 82.

[20] Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 85.

[21] Sagan, 85.

[22] Sagan, 85.

2. North Korea's Motivations

Although many researchers have treated North Korea's security concerns about foreign threats as the critical driver for its nuclear program from 1994 to 2009, it is questionable how appropriate this explanation is. Research that analyzes North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons from the security perspective explains that security has consistently been the major concern for North Korea. Victor Cha asserts that "North Korea undertakes limited but serious crisis-inducing acts of violence with the hope of leveraging crises more to its advantage," and its intention remains unchanged.[23] In addition, Siegfried Hecker argues that "[s]ecurity concerns have been the central driver of the North Korean ruling regime since the birth of the nation after World War II," and its motivation for developing nuclear weapons can also be understood by examining its security environment.[24] Selig Harrison also explains that no one could expect North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and missiles without addressing North Korea's security concerns,[25] and Bradley Thayer claims that South Korea's growth of conventional military power caused North Korea to develop nuclear weapons.[26]

A few researchers have tried to explain North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons from a different point of view.[27] For example, Glenn Chafetz, Hillel Abramson, and Suzette Grillot suggest a normative cause, such as that country's aim to

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[23] Cha and Kang, "The Debate over North Korea," 232.

[24] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 48.

[25] Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea," 23.

[26] Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," 496.

[27] There have been studies that explain the motives behind nuclear proliferation that involve factors other than security. For example, Peter Lavoy describes motivations for developing nuclear weapons as "the strategic beliefs and political activities of highly motivated and resourceful individuals." See Peter R. Lavoy, "Nuclear Myths and the Causes of Nuclear Proliferation," *Security Studies* 2, no. 3–4 (1993): 192, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419309347524. Also, Solingen argues that domestic politics, such as domestic receptivity to external persuasion, is an important factor. See Etel Solingen, "The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994): 145, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539198. Separate research is needed, however, because domestic politics and personality of leadership can be fundamentally different from one state to another. In this regard, this thesis examines only research that contains explanations on North Korea's motivation for nuclear weapons development.

represent "a rebel against Western imperialism."[28] Jacques Hymans also focuses on leadership and argues that North Korea's "nuclear intentions are a product of its leadership's oppositional nationalist identity conception."[29] On the other hand, Etel Solingen argues that domestic politics, such as domestic receptivity to external persuasion, is an important factor.[30] David Kang also tries to understand North Korea's intention for developing nuclear weapons through the theory of political economy.[31]

Some recent studies suggest looking at Kim Jong-il's personal interests when conducting research on domestic political drivers for North Korea's nuclear weapons development from 1994 to 2009. Sagan explains that a domestic political motive for developing nuclear weapons is to employ them "as political tools … to advance parochial domestic and bureaucratic interests."[32] In this point of view, a recent study points out that under a personalist dictatorship, "where power is highly concentrated in the hands of a single individual"[33] as is the case in North Korea, this range of interests can be narrowed down to individuals. Under this personalist dictatorship, a leader has "such dominant personal power that other state institutions—parties, politburos, or military officers—cannot overrule the decisions made at the top."[34] These studies suggest that research on North Korea's domestic political motives for developing nuclear weapons needs to look at Kim Jong-il's personal interests.

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[28] Glenn Chafetz, Hillel Abramson, and Suzette Grillot, "Role Theory and Foreign Policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian Compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime," *Political Psychology* 17, no. 4 (1996): 748, https://doi.org/10.2307/3792136.

[29] Jacques E. C. Hymans, "Assessing North Korean Nuclear Intentions and Capacities: A New Approach," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2008): 278-279, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1598240800005324.

[30] Solingen, "The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint," 145.

[31] Cha and Kang, "The Debate over North Korea," 232.

[32] Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 55.

[33] Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Erica Frantz, and Joseph Wright, "The New Dictators," *Foreign Affairs*, last modified September 26, 2016, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-09-26/new-dictators.

[34] Scott D. Sagan, "Armed and Dangerous," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 6 (2018): 35, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-10-15/armed-and-dangerous.

As interpretations of North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons have largely leaned to security concerns,[35] considerations on multicausality and internal situational context have been insufficient. The period from 1994 to 2009 is important in terms of North Korea's domestic politics in that the long-held dictatorship of Kim Il-sung ended, and Kim Jong-il inherited and maintained power. Also, the collapse of socialism and repeated natural disasters fueled the deterioration of North Korean economic conditions. At the same time, in this period, North Korea's nuclear program was advanced by extracting plutonium from spent fuel, pursuing uranium enrichment, expanding the country's missile program, withdrawing from the NPT, and conducting two nuclear tests.[36] Based on this domestic turmoil and responses, one can speculate that the most important motivation of North Korea's nuclear weapons development at the time of the Agreed Framework and the Six Party Talks, from 1994 to 2009, somewhat changed from security concerns to domestic politics.

Nevertheless, there has been only a small number of detailed studies on how security concerns and domestic politics of North Korea have simultaneously affected the development of nuclear weapons. Benjamin Habib and Liang Tuang Nah conducted research that considers both security concerns and domestic politics. Habib argues that North Korea's nuclear weapons program provides not only a security guarantee [37] but also the foundation for military-first (Songun) politics. Habib further explains that North Korea's nuclear program gives an essential element for maintaining economic stability, the interests of the local bureaucracy, and ideological legitimacy.[38] Also, relying on three international relations theories—realism, liberalism, and constructivism—Liang Tuang

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[35] Cha and Kang, "The Debate over North Korea," 232; Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 48; Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea," 23; Hughes, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons," 82; Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 85; Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," 496.

[36] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 46-47.

[37] Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the Songun System," *The Pacific Review* 24, no. 1 (2011): 46, https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2011.554992.

[38] Habib, 59–60.

Nah explains North Korea's motivation for developing nuclear weapons.[39] Specifically, according to the theory of liberalism, Nah interprets North Korea's motivation to develop nuclear weapons between 1991 to 2007 as an attempt to obtain economic benefits from several negotiations.[40]

To sum up, many researchers have explained North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons based on North Korea's security concerns of seeking survival in the "Hobbesian Jungle." Nevertheless, there is still much debate over major drivers of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. Therefore, this thesis can contribute to the debate by more accurately examining the extent to which North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons evolved from security concerns to domestic politics from 1994 to 2009.

3. North Korean Domestic Politics

Despite predictions that North Korea would collapse due to its domestic instability, including the economic crisis and natural disasters following the death of Kim Il-sung in 1994, Kim Jong-il successfully succeeded his father and maintained national stability. As the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Eastern bloc collapsed, the North Korean economic crisis grew more severe: in 1990, imports from the Soviet Union plunged to 10 percent of previous levels.[41] In addition, according to a United Nations (UN) survey, the catastrophic floods in 1995 and 1996 caused more than 500,000 people to be displaced.[42]

Above all, this period was a sensitive time for North Korea. Kim Il-sung, as a personalist dictator, had more power than any of the political parties.[43] With his passing,

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[39] Liang Tuang Nah, "Explaining North Korean Nuclear Weapons Motivations: Constructivism, Liberalism, and Realism," *North Korean Review* 9, no. 1 (2013): 61, https://doi.org/10.3172/NKR.9.1.61.

[40] Nah, 67.

[41] Marcus Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," *Asian Economic Papers* 3, no. 2 (2004): 4–5, https://doi.org/10.1162/1535351044193411.

[42] Noland, 6.

[43] Sagan, "Armed and Dangerous," 35.

Kim Il-sung's power, which had lasted approximately 44 years,[44] was transferred to Kim Jong-il. Despite predictions at the time that North Korea would collapse under those domestic crises, however, Kim Jong-il successfully succeeded his father's authority and maintained it.[45]

Military-first politics emerged in this period as "the fundamental defining feature of North Korea,"[46] and it is interpreted as a means of overcoming a crisis or consolidating power out of concern for the domestic political situation of North Korea at the time. According to a book published by the North Korean publishing bureau of foreign-language documents, the Foreign Language Publishing House (FLPH), military-first politics means giving "precedence to military affairs as the most important national affairs and the army as the main force of the revolution."[47] Some scholars describe military-first politics as a means of managing a domestic crisis. Daniel Pinkston and Hazel Smith, for example, argue that Kim Jong-il pursued the stability and survival of his regime by prioritizing resources to the military through military-first politics.[48] Other scholars explain military-first politics based on the power balance between the Korean Workers Party (KWP) and the Korean People's Army (KPA). Cha, Ken Gause, and Jongseok Woo claim that Kim Jong-il tried

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[44] How long Kim Il-sung had been in power is a subject of much controversy, but this thesis considers him to have been in power since the Korean War.

[45] Marcus Noland, "Why North Korea Will Muddle Through," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 4 (1997): 106, https://doi.org/10.2307/20048125; Scott Snyder, "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future," *Pacific Affairs: An International Review of Asia and the Pacific* 73, no. 4 (2000): 518, https://doi.org/10.2307/2672442; Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, "The Korea Crisis," *Foreign Policy*, no. 136 (2003): 21, https://www.nknews.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/9564893.pdf.

[46] Victor D. Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York, NY: Ecco, 2012), 92.

[47] Jong Chol Ri, *Songun Politics in Korea* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Language Publishing House, 2012), 1, http://www.bannedthought.net/Korea-DPRK/Ideology/SongunPoliticsInKorea-2012.pdf.

[48] Daniel A. Pinkston, "North Korea's Foreign Policy Towards the United States," *Strategic Insight* 5, no. 7 (2006): 2, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a521368.pdf; Smith, *North Korea*, 235.

to weaken the existing power of the KWP through military-first politics and consolidate his power based on the KPA.[49]

Meanwhile, although North Korea's domestic politics can be distinguished based on the range of people affecting decision making, there is a consensus that Kim Jong-il had the final decision-making authority. First, Joseph Bermudez and Soyoung Kwon explain that only Kim Jong-il exerted unlimited authority in the decision-making process of North Korean policies.[50] Kong Dan Oh and Ralph Hassig expand the range of people who influence decision making a little bit more and argue that Kim Jong-il relied on "a kitchen cabinet composed of a small group of friends and family members of approximately his own age."[51] Finally, while Patrick McEachern and Terence Roehrig assert that Kim Jong-il was the most important person in North Korean domestic politics, they also argue that policies are formed through a balance of power among the KWP, the KPA, and the government under Kim Jong-il's authority.[52]

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis hypothesizes that the most important driver for North Korea's nuclear weapons development process at the time of the Agreed Framework and the Six Party Talks, from 1994 to 2009, somewhat changed from security concerns to domestic politics. Although there was a huge change in the international security environment marked by the

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[49] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 91; Jongseok Woo, "Songun Politics and the Political Weakness of the Military in North Korea: An Institutional Account," *Problems of Post-Communism* 63, no. 4 (2016): 260, https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2016.1145065; Ken E. Gause, *North Korean Civil-Military Trends: Military-First Politics to a Point* (Strategic Studies Institute in Army War College, 2006), v–vi.

[50] Joseph Bermudez, "The Military and the Power-Holding Elite," in *North Korea Policy Elites*, ed. Kongdan O. Hassig (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2004), I-29; Soyoung Kwon, "State Building in North Korea: From a 'Self Reliant' to a 'Military-First' State," *Asian Affairs* 34, no. 3 (2003): 294, https://doi.org/10.1080/0306837032000136314.

[51] Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea through the Looking Glass* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 97.

[52] Patrick McEachern, *Inside the Red Box: North Korea's Post-Totalitarian Politics, Contemporary Asia in the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 215; Patrick McEachern, "North Korea's Internal Politics and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development*, ed. Jae-Jung Suh (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 149–156; Terence Roehrig, "The Roles and Influence of the Military," in *North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society*, ed. Kyung-Ae Park and Scott Snyder (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 54.

collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, this period is more important in terms of North Korea's domestic politics. A dictator who does not have full control of his or her military in the process of power transfer encounters a coup,[53] and, in a personalist dictatorship like North Korea, upon the successful consolidation of power, Kim Jong-il's personal interests could have become the most important criterion of decision making. Thus, solving domestic turmoil could have been the most important driver for Kim Jong-il in making decisions for North Korea's policies. From this point of view, especially with regard to this period, the largest part of North Korea's motivation for developing nuclear weapons could have belonged to domestic politics.

This thesis tests the hypothesis that the prevailing driver for nuclear weapons development of North Korea changed from security concerns to domestic politics by examining how military-first politics related to that country's development of nuclear weapons. Military-first politics that emerged after Kim Jong-il took power is the most noticeable change in the policy of his regime.[54] Therefore, if the major motivation for developing nuclear weapons changed from security concerns to domestic politics, the related changes of Kim Jong-il's perception or response would have been made in the same context when it dealt with military-first politics. From this point of view, this thesis examines how military-first politics related to nuclear weapons development of North Korea, and what the intentions, if any, of this development were. Through this process, the thesis tests the hypothesis that the major motivation for North Korea's nuclear weapons development changed somewhat from security concerns to domestic politics.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

Documentary surveys were conducted to find a relationship between North Korea's motivation for developing nuclear weapons and domestic politics. First, the thesis looks into existing studies on North Korea's motives for developing nuclear weapons from 1994 to 2007. By doing so, it examines on what evidence these studies are based in determining

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[53] Milan W. Svolik, "Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 2 (2009): 478, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00382.x.

[54] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 92.

North Korea's motives for developing nuclear weapons. The thesis then looks into studies on North Korea's domestic political characteristics, and by doing so it examines what its domestic political interests meant to Kim Jong-il at the time. Finally, the thesis examines existing studies on the relationship between North Korea's nuclear weapons development and domestic politics to analyze which arguments are persuasive or unconvincing. Through this process, this thesis provides a persuasive explanation of how North Korea's nuclear weapons development was related to Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests at the time.

During this process, this thesis applies a modified version of Graham Allison's decision-making models, which reduces three categories into two. Allison devised three models—the Rational Actor Model (RAM), the Organizational Process Model (OPM), and the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM)—to explain the behavior of the U.S. government during the Cuban missile crisis. The RAM defines a government as a rational and unitary actor, who has "one set of specified goals," which are national interests.[55] On the other hand, the OPM and the BPM see a government as "no unitary actor but many actors as players,"[56] whose domestic political interests are distinct from national interests.[57] To be specific, under the OPM, the goal is to abide by "constraints defining acceptable performance," and under the BPM, goals include "national, organizational, and personal interests."[58] Based on Allison's models, this thesis explains the security perspective on the North Korean nuclear weapons program by applying the RAM, and describes the domestic political perspective on the program by applying other models, including the OPM and the BPM.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis consists of four chapters. In this first chapter, the thesis has examined accumulated knowledge about North Korean motivations for developing nuclear weapons.

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[55] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 23-27.

[56] Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review* 63, no. 3 (1969): 707, https://doi.org/10.2307/1954423.

[57] Allison, 698–715.

[58] Allison, 700 and 707.

Next, in the second chapter, the thesis investigates the North Korean nuclear program from the security perspective. In the third chapter, the thesis questions the interpretation of the security perspective and suggests an alternative explanation based on the domestic political perspective. Finally, the last chapter summarizes major conclusions, discusses how they contribute to broader knowledge, summarizes any policy implications, and identifies opportunities for future research.

II. THE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

As Chapter I discussed, scholars have mainly interpreted North Korea's nuclear weapons program from the security perspective. Many scholars have regarded the nuclear weapons program as a result of its security concerns, based on the assumption that North Korea is a rational and unitary actor seeking survival in the anarchic international system. In this regard, North Korea fits well into the RAM, which assumes a unified national actor who has a coherent utility function of value-maximizing,[59] in that Kim Jong-il monopolized power under the supreme leader system, enabling the direct translation of security concerns into policies. Thus, this chapter examines the assumption that the nuclear weapons program could be a result of Kim Jong-il's security concerns and that the same priority of interests could have played a relatively consistent role in the case of military-first politics (see Table 1).

Table 1. Explanation from the Security Perspective

<table>
<tr><td>Basis</td><td colspan="2">Kim Jong-il monopolized power under the supreme leader system, enabling the direct translation of security concerns into policies.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Priority of Interests</td><td colspan="2">North Korea fits into the RAM, which assumes a unified national actor who has a coherent utility function of value-maximizing.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Survival is the most important value of a state. Also, Kim Jong-il could act on behalf of North Korea's national interests, and, in this regard, his words and writings show his interests about survival in the anarchic international system.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Motives of the policies</td><td colspan="2">Military-first politics and the development of nuclear weapons were results of a relatively coherent utility function, which values survival.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Military-first politics: to concentrate scarce resources to the military sector.</td><td>The nuclear weapons development: to have a deterrence capability against the South Korean conventional military forces and U.S. hardline policy.</td></tr>
</table>

[59] Allison defines "value-maximizing" behavior as "the likelihood of any particular action results from a combination of the nation's (1) relevant values and objectives, (2) perceived alternative courses of action, (3) esti-mates of various sets of consequences (which will follow from each alternative), and (4) net valuation of each set of consequences." See Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 23–27; Hazel Smith, "Bad, Mad, Sad or Rational Actor? Why the 'Securitization' Paradigm Makes for Poor Policy Analysis of North Korea," *International Affairs* 76, no. 3 (2000): 614–616, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00154.

A. TWO MAJOR POLICIES OF THE KIM JONG-IL ERA

Scholars have regarded military-first politics and the continuation of nuclear weapons development as two major policies of the Kim Jong-il era. Military-first politics was the most evident change in North Korean policy during the Kim Jong-il era.[60] North Korea has claimed that military-first politics is a creative way of protecting the nation from imperialist forces and building socialism by giving top priority to military affairs. Under the banner of military-first politics, Kim Jong-il strengthened the authority of the National Defense Commission (NDC); he elevated the status of the military; he enlarged the roles of the military in the economic area; he strengthened control over the North Korean people's movement and thinking. At the same time, Kim Jong-il sustained and in some ways accelerated the development of nuclear weapons. Given the North Korean economic crisis at the time and the cost for developing nuclear weapons, his decision to continue or accelerate the nuclear weapons program is the other major change in policy.

1. The Advent of Military-First Politics

The emergence of military-first politics is "the fundamental defining feature of North Korea" during the Kim Jong-il era.[61] North Korean media have explained that military-first politics began in 1995, but the term "military-first politics" first appeared in December 1997.[62] According to a North Korean official publication of the FLPH, military-first politics is "a revolutionary mode of leadership and socialist mode of politics that gives top priority to military affairs, and defends the country, the revolution and socialism and dynamically pushes ahead with overall socialist construction by dint of the revolutionary mettle and combat capabilities of the People's Army."[63] According to the same publication, military-first politics comes from the view of the world that "the United States and other imperialist forces [have] resorted to every manner of vicious schemes to stifle

60 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 92.

61 Cha, 92.

62 Pinkston, "North Korea's Foreign Policy Towards the United States," 4.

63 Ri, *Songun Politics in Korea*, 1.

[North] Korea."[64] Based on this standpoint, North Korea concludes that the only way to counter U.S. hardline policy is to build strong military forces.[65] The North Korean leader's New Year address, which is the guiding principle of the supreme leader, shows this perception well. To be specific, negative expressions about the United States, which disappeared after the late 1970s, began to be used by North Korean leaders again in the Kim Jong-il era.[66]

Under the banner of military-first politics, there were some noticeable changes in the government's policy, including the strengthened authority of the NDC and status of the KPA, an enlarged role of the KPA in the economic area, and strengthened government control of the movement and thoughts of the North Korean people.

a. Strengthened Authority of the NDC and the Status of the KPA

Military-first politics strengthened the NDC's authority and the status of the KPA. Under the banner of military-first politics, through constitutional revisions on September 5, 1998, North Korea abolished the premier (Jusuk) system and transferred most of its political, military, and economic authorities to the NDC.[67] The fact that members of the NDC began to overtake Politburo and Secretariat members in social position reveals the strengthened authority of the NDC. For example, in 1995, Cho Myong Nok, the first vice-chairman of the NDC, was ranked in 95th on the list of national rituals, which shows a person's social position in the government, but he was ranked third on the list in 2001.[68]

In addition, a high ratio of Kim Jong-il visitation to military units and a change in the composition of the entourage that accompanied Kim Jong-il on his on-the-spot

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64 Ri, 23.

65 Ri, 25.

66 Jong Hee Park, Eunjeong Park, and Dong-Joon Jo, "Automated Text Analysis of North Korean New Year Addresses, 1946–2015," *Korean Political Science Review* 49, no. 2 (June 2015): 49, http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE06388044.

67 Gause, *North Korean Civil-Military Trends*, 7; Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea's Nuclear Strategy and the Interface Between International and Domestic Politics," *Asian Perspective* 34, no. 1 (2010): 59–60, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/713259/pdf; Pinkston, "North Korea's Foreign Policy Towards the United States," 4.

68 Gause, *North Korean Civil-Military Trends*, 7.

guidance created an atmosphere that values the military. Because Kim Jong-il was reluctant to have meetings and preferred to manage state affairs behind the scenes, the role of the former centers of power, such as the Politburo, deteriorated, but the political position of the entourage accompanying him on his on-the-spot guidance was raised further.[69] In this respect, the frequency of on-the-spot guidance to the military units grew after Kim Jong-il took power, and the proportion of military officers in his entourage gradually increased and became the largest in 2003.[70] These trends demonstrate the strengthened influence of the KPA.

b. Enlarged Role of the Military in the North Korean Economy

Military-first politics enlarged the role of the military in the economic area. The KPA controlled major trading companies, which managed the domestic food distribution and supplied uniforms and weapons for the military.[71] Accordingly, the government deployed military personnel to construction sites and established new military farms.[72] For example, the military was deployed to large size construction projects, including Taecheon Power Plant, Gaecheon-Taeseongho Waterway, and Pyongyang-Hyangsan Tourism Road.[73] Also, the military was deployed to cultivate land on behalf of farmers who lost their desire to work and to create military farms to take direct responsibility for farming.[74] Some researchers estimate that the military economy accounted for up to 70 percent of the North Korean domestic defense industries.[75] In this process, the NDC controlled all

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69 Gause, 7.

70 Gause, 9.

71 Stephan Haggard, *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid, and Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 54.

72 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 92; Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the Songun System," 51.

73 Ilho Moon, "Bug-Han-Seon-Gun-Jeong-Chi-Ui Teug-Seong-e Gwan-Han Yeon-Gu ["A Study on Characteristics of North Korean Songun Politics"]," *Unification Strategy* 4, no. 1 (August 2004): 42, http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE00953989.

74 Moon, 42.

75 Daniel A. Pinkston, "Domestic Politics and Stakeholders in the North Korean Missile Development Program," *The Nonproliferation Review* 10, no. 2 (2003): 58, https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700308436930.

activities relating to the military economy and was in charge of the overall process from planning to exporting of military equipment and related technologies.[76]

c. Strengthened Government Control of North Koreans' Movement and Thoughts

Military-first politics also tightened the government's control of North Koreans' movement and thoughts. To be specific, the NDC, the core organization of military-first politics, had gradually changed its character from a military organization to one that controls society as a whole. For example, the fact that personnel from the Ministry of People's Security (MPS) and the State Security Department (SSD) were added to the NDC while the commanders of the Pyongyang Defense Command (PDC) and the People's Armed Forces (PAF) were excluded after 1998 indirectly indicates that military-first politics aimed to strengthen functions for social control.[77] In this context, the North Korean government dispatched troops to farms and stations to monitor its people and tried to control their lives through the MPS and the SSD.[78]

2. Continued North Korean Nuclear Weapons Development

While implementing military-first politics, North Korea simultaneously continued to develop nuclear weapons. Given the enormous investment required for developing nuclear weapons in comparison with the North Korean gross domestic product (GDP) and the country's severe economic crisis, Kim Jong-il's decision to continue and in ways accelerate nuclear weapons development represents the other major policy.

In late 1994, when Kim Jong-il took power, the North Korean economy was at its worst due to reduced aid caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and famine that followed several natural disasters.[79] Accordingly, considering the economic crisis at the

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[76] Joseph S. Bermudez, *The Armed Forces of North Korea*, Armed Forces of Asia (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 45–47.

[77] Sangkeun Lee, "Stability and Change in the North Korean Regime: Focusing on Norms and Control Mechanisms during the Kim Jong Il Era," *Review of North Korean Studies* 20, no. 3 (2017): 74–75, http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE07292637.

[78] Lee, 75.

[79] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 122; Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 4–6.

time and the huge investment required for developing nuclear weapons, Kim Jong-il would have had to make a decision on suspension, continuation, or acceleration of nuclear weapons development after he took power.[80] In this respect, it is significant that he decided to invest a relatively sizeable amount of money into North Korea's nuclear weapons program under the economic crisis. In other words, considering the cost for developing a nuclear warhead, which was equal to about 2.57 to 6.76 percent of its GDP at the time of North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006,[81] continuing to develop nuclear weapons in spite of the economic crisis was a major policy, which had a necessity and an importance commensurate with the cost.

Meanwhile, the North Korean nuclear weapons program is an integration of its nuclear and missile programs as missiles are the primary means of delivering nuclear warheads for North Korea.[82]

a. Continued International Efforts to Deter North Korea's Nuclear Program

In the 1990s and 2000s, North Korea continued to develop its nuclear program in terms of technology, and the international community's efforts such as the Agreed

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[80] With regard to the cost of the North Korean nuclear weapons program, see "Less than One Aircraft Carrier? The Cost of North Korea's Nukes," CNBC, July 20, 2017, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/07/20/less-than-one-aircraft-carrier-the-cost-of-north-koreas-nukes.html; Ramy Inocencio, "North Korea's Rocket Launches Cost $1.3 Billion," CNN, December 12, 2012, https://www.cnn.com/2012/12/12/business/north-korea-rocket-cost/index.html; Tim Wright, "Spending on Nuclear Weapons," Ican, September 2011, http://www.icanw.org/the-facts/catastrophic-harm/a-diversion-of-public-resources; with regard to North Korean GDP, see "The World Factbook - Korea, North," CIA, July 18, 2019, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html.

[81] The U.S. Department of State estimates that North Korean GDP in 2006 was 13.3 billion 2018 dollars. See "World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 2018," Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, 2018, https://www.state.gov/world-military-expenditures-and-arms-transfers-2018. When North Korea executed its first nuclear test, the South Korean government estimates that the cost for each nuclear warhead was 290 to 764 million 2006 dollars. See Yung-jong Lee, "60 yeo-nyeon go-nan-ui haeng-gun-eu-lo haeg bo-yu ["North Korea Obtains Nuclear Weapon by Arduous March for 60 Years"]," *Economist*, March 18, 2019, http://jmagazine.joins.com/economist/view/325179. The won-dollar exchange rate was 954.36 won in October 2006, when North Korea conducted its first nuclear test, and the exchange rate was 1,122.85 won in December 2018, when "World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 2018" was published. See "Exchange Rate Inquiry by Period," Woori Bank, November 5, 2019, https://spot.wooribank.com/pot/Dream?withyou=CQIBG0046.

[82] Markus Schiller, *Characterizing the North Korean Nuclear Missile Threat* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012), iii.

Framework and the Six Party Talks also continued with the aim to deter North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons.

The North Korean nuclear program began in the 1950s with Kim Il-sung's efforts to develop nuclear technologies, and in 1986, North Korea started operating its five megawatt-electric reactor in Yongbyon, subsequently attempting to extract plutonium by building reprocessing facilities.[83] In 1992 and 1993, one of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) inspections found a discrepancy in the amount of reprocessed plutonium between the submitted data of North Korea and the IAEA's estimated figure.[84] Accordingly, the IAEA requested special inspections on two sites, but North Korea rejected the request and announced its intention to withdraw from the NPT.[85] Subsequently, the first nuclear crisis escalated in 1994 when North Korea began removing spent fuel rods from the Yongbyon reactor without the IAEA's monitoring.[86]

However, bilateral talks between the United States and North Korea to resolve the crisis began after former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's visit to North Korea in June 1994, and the Agreed Framework was signed in October of the same year.[87] In the Agreed Framework signed on October 21, 1994, the United States and North Korea agreed that the latter would shut down the reactor in Yongbyon and allow the IAEA's special inspections.[88] In return, the United States promised to normalize political and diplomatic relations with North Korea, to construct proliferation-resistant light-water reactors through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) for replacing graphite-moderated reactors, and to provide annual shipments of heavy fuel oil during the construction of those reactors.[89]

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[83] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 44–45.

[84] Hecker, 45.

[85] Kelsey Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy," Arms Control Association, July 2019, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron.

[86] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 46.

[87] Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

[88] Kelsey Davenport, "The U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance," Arms Control Association, July 2018, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/agreedframework.

[89] Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

Under the Agreed Framework, the North Korean nuclear program appeared to be suspended, although suspicions were raised about the nuclear facilities at Kumchang-ni, which were found to be untrue in 1999.[90] Nevertheless, implementation of the Agreed Framework was slow due to the proliferation of North Korean missiles and the Bush administration's changes in U.S. policies toward North Korea.[91] In this situation, the second nuclear crisis began in 2002 when the United States suspected North Korea of enriching uranium.[92] The second nuclear crisis escalated in October 2002 after the visit of James Kelly, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, to North Korea and the announcement of suspicion about uranium enrichment.[93] The IAEA demanded that North Korea confirm its uranium enrichment program, but North Korea refused to do so and threatened to restart its reactor in Yongbyon and to withdraw from the NPT.[94]

Accordingly, six rounds of Six Party Talks among the United States, South Korea, Russia, China, Japan, and North Korea to resolve the issue were held from 2003 to 2009. Especially, in the fourth round, North Korea committed to "abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning, at an early date, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards" in return for ensuring North Korea's right to peaceful use of nuclear energy and providing the light-water reactors.[95] The atmosphere of the talks severely deteriorated, however, due to the U.S. State Department's sanction on Banco Delta Asia (BDA) in 2005, which caused a freeze of $25 million dollars of North Korean funds, prompting North Korea to boycott the further Six Party Talks and to conduct its first underground nuclear test on October 9, 2006.[96]

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[90] Davenport.

[91] Davenport, "The U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance."

[92] Davenport.

[93] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 46.

[94] Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

[95] Davenport.

[96] Kelsey Davenport, "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance," Arms Control Association, June 2018, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks.

After that, the Six Party Talks resumed with the lifting of the U.S. sanction on the BDA, and in 2007, the six parties agreed on the action plan's initial steps to implement the joint statement in 2005.[97] Yet, subsequent talks broke down in 2009 due to North Korea's continued rocket launches and disagreements over verification, and the Six Party Talks have not yet restarted.[98]

b. Continued Advancement of North Korea's Missile Program

In the 1990s and 2000s, North Korea continued to advance its missile programs, which is the other part of the nuclear weapons program. Advancement included test-firing of Taepo Dong-1/2 missiles and Unha-2 missiles, while efforts of the international community to stop the North Korean missile proliferation continued simultaneously.

The South Korean Ministry of National Defense (MND) estimates that the North Korean missile program started after North Korea acquired some missile technologies from the Chinese missile development program in the early 1970s.[99] Subsequently, North Korea made efforts to develop and deploy short- and medium-range missiles, including Scud-C and Nodong ballistic missiles, until the early 1990s.[100] After Kim Jong-il took power, North Korea focused more on developing intermediate- and long-range missiles. In this process, in 1998 North Korea test-fired a Taepo Dong-1 intermediate-range missile with a range of 1,500 to 2,000 kilometers, and then Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director George Tenet testified that the missile could deliver small payloads to Alaska and Hawaii with some technological improvements.[101] Also, in 2006, North Korea test-fired its longest-range Taepo Dong-2 missile, although the United States assessed it failed.[102] Subsequently, North Korea test-fired an Unha-2 rocket, a modified version of the Taepo

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97 Davenport.

98 Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

99 Ministry of National Defense of Republic of Korea, *2012 Defense White Paper* (Seoul, Korea: Ministry of National Defense, 2012), 356.

100 Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

101 Davenport.

102 Davenport.

Dong-2 long-range missile.[103] Although the United States reported that the rocket's bodies landed in the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean, North Korea announced its success in placing a satellite into the orbit.[104]

At the same time, efforts of the international community to stop North Korean missile proliferation continued. First, in 1992, the United States began to place sanctions on some North Korean companies, which were related to the North Korean missile proliferation,[105] and the UN, Japan, and Australia placed sanctions on North Korea after the test-firing of the Taepo Dong-2 long-range missile in 2006.[106] Also, bilateral missile talks between the United States and North Korea to stop the latter's missile proliferation continued. The United States and North Korea had their first bilateral missile talks in Berlin in 1996.[107] In the talks, the United States demanded North Korea's compliance with the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), [108] and North Korea demanded compensation for financial losses caused by halting missile exports.[109] In their fourth bilateral missile talks in Berlin in 1999, North Korea declared a moratorium on long-range missile tests in return for U.S. partial lifting of economic sanctions.[110] The moratorium lasted for seven years until North Korea test-fired a Taepo Dong-2 long-range missile in 2006.[111] Aside from the moratorium on long-range missile tests, however, North Korea again demanded $1 billion per year in compensation for halting its missile exports during

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[103] Davenport.

[104] Davenport.

[105] Dianne E. Rennack, *North Korea Economic Sanctions*, CRS Report No. RL31696 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2006), 29, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL31696.pdf.

[106] Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

[107] Davenport.

[108] The MTCR is "a voluntary international regime that prevents the proliferation of rockets that carry WMDs, unmanned aerial vehicles; the export of relevant equipment; and technology transfer." See Ministry of National Defense of Republic of Korea, *2012 Defense White Paper*, 390.

[109] Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

[110] Davenport.

[111] Davenport.

the fifth round of missile talks in Kuala Lumpur.[112] Accordingly, missile talks made little progress, and no further missile talks took place after the talks in 2000.[113]

B. THE SUPREME LEADER SYSTEM: KIM JONG-IL AS AN EMBODIMENT OF A UNITARY NATIONAL ACTOR

Kim Jong-il was the embodiment of a unitary national actor as he monopolized power in all aspects under the supreme leader (Suryong) system, and accordingly, he could act on behalf of North Korea's national interests. From the security perspective, North Korea is one of the unitary actors in the anarchic international system. Especially for North Korea, Kim Jong-il was an embodiment of this unitary national actor in that he monopolized power based on the supreme leader system. This situation makes North Korea fit well into the RAM, which assumes a unified national actor who has a coherent utility function of value-maximizing.[114] Therefore, as the embodiment of the unitary national actor of North Korea, Kim Jong-il could act on behalf of North Korea's national interests.

The supreme leader system, which emerged in the late 1960s, established its theoretical foundation in the late 1980s, and it gradually turned into a system where all power is concentrated on the supreme leader. The concept of the system emerged in the late 1960s during a conference of social scientists, and they defined the supreme leader as "the brain that exclusively leads the party, the regime, and labor organizations."[115] Subsequently, in the late 1980s, the system was established according to two of its most prominent theoretical foundations, "the theory of socio-political organism" and the "Juche outlook on the revolution."[116] According to the former theory, North Korea as a socio-political organism comprises various entities that have their own roles, including "Suryong as the great leader of the revolution and social construction, the KWP as the general staff

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112 Davenport.

113 Davenport.

114 Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 694.

115 Ministry of Unification, *Bug-Han Ji-Sig Sa-Jeon* [*Dictionary about North Korea*] (Seoul, Korea: Ministry of Unification, 2016), 448–449, https://www.uniedu.go.kr/uniedu/atchfile/down/F000045357.pdf.

116 Kap-Sik Kim, "Suryong's Direct Rule and the Political Regime in North Korea under Kim Jong Il," *Asian Perspective* 32, no. 3 (2008): 92-93, https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/215884979?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo.

of the revolution, the government as the transmission belt of the KWP and the masses, and the KPA as the KWP's revolutionary force."[117] Then the theory divides a person's life into physical life and socio-political life, and argues that the latter is more valuable because a socio-political life is eternal through a socio-political organism, unlike a person's finite physical life.[118] Accordingly, the theory justifies that serving the supreme leader is the fundamental requirement, joy, and glory for the KWP, the government, and the masses as a part of the socio-political organism, North Korea.[119] In addition to this, the Juche outlook on the revolution demands the people's devotion to following the supreme leader's revolutionary ideas and leadership unconditionally and thoroughly.[120]

As Kim Jong-il gradually gave himself omnipotent authority, he became the main agent of policy decisions in North Korea.[121] During the Kim Il-sung era, the decision-making process comprised not only top-down instruction but also bottom-up components, and the process was clearly defined. The process usually included a proposal by a department, a review and submission by the Party guidance committee, an approval by the Party Secretariat chaired by the General Secretary, and a return for implementation.[122] By contrast, Kim Jong-il replaced the former decision-making process with so-called crony politics and report politics. Major policies were increasingly processed privately through

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[117] Kim, 92.

[118] Ministry of Unification, *Bug-Han Ji-Sig Sa-Jeon* [*Dictionary about North Korea*], 371.

[119] Ministry of Unification, 371.

[120] Ministry of Unification, 449.

[121] Although explanations of North Korean domestic politics can be distinguished based on the range of people affecting decision making, there is a consensus on the point that Kim Jong-il had the final decision-making authority. See Bermudez, "The Military and the Power-Holding Elite," I-29; Kwon, "State Building in North Korea," 294; Oh and Hassig, *North Korea through the Looking Glass*, 97. In this regard, McEachern argues that "North Korea's bureaucracies have sufficient autonomy, corporate identity, and conflicting objectives that their advocacy and actions help explain variant North Korean policy outcomes." See McEachern, *Inside the Red Box*, 215. However, his methodology based on readings of North Korean media suffers from some problems in that what policy makers write for the public and their own preferences do not necessarily have direct relations, and it is unclear how well the contents provided to the public represent internal debate among policy makers. See David C. Kang, "They Think They're Normal: Enduring Questions and New Research on North Korea," *International Security* 36, no. 3 (2011): 151, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00068.

[122] Ken E. Gause, "North Korean Leadership Dynamics and Decision-Making under Kim Jong-Un: A Second Year Assessment," Report, CNA, 2014, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a598497.pdf.

gatherings of close aide at Kim Jong-il's residences. Also, in all circumstances, including the aide gatherings and on-the-spot guidance, the KWP Organization Guidance Department recorded Kim Jong-il's instructions and transmitted them to related departments.[123] Then, related departments executed sufficient consultations and submitted a report of policy draft addressing the instructions to Kim Jong-il.[124]

Considering these facts, the decision-making process of North Korea fits well into the RAM, which assumes a unified national actor who has a coherent utility function of value-maximizing.[125] Designed for analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis case, the RAM defines a nation or government as a rational and unitary actor. This actor has "one set of specified goals (the equivalent of a consistent utility function), one set of perceived options, and a single estimate of the consequences that follow from each alternative." [126] Accordingly, under this circumstance, a rational agent "selects the alternative whose consequences rank highest in terms of his goals and objectives."[127] The North Korean decision-making process fits well into this model in that Kim Jong-il monopolized power as leader, making a choice to maximize his value, which can be related to North Korea's national interests. Based on this theory, the two major policies of the Kim Jong-il era—military-first politics and the development of nuclear weapons—can be understood as results of Kim Jong-il's relatively coherent utility function of maximizing North Korea's national interests.

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[123] Gause, 98–100.

[124] According to North Korean elite defector accounts, Kim Jong-il's approval or disapproval of proposals was usually made in three ways. First, Signed Instructions, which include the signature, date, and a written opinion, meaning that the instructions should be implemented the way they were written and that the responsibilities lie with him as well. Next, Signed Documents, which include only the date without the signature and comments, meaning that Kim Jong-il approved them but did not take responsibility for them nonetheless. Finally, documents returned without the signature and the date meant that they were not approved or were hard to understand, and that the writers did not accurately judge his intentions. See Gause, 101–102.

[125] Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 23–27; Smith, "Bad, Mad, Sad or Rational Actor," 614–616.

[126] Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 694.

[127] Allison, 694.

C. MOTIVATIONS FOR THE POLICIES RELATED TO THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The end of the Cold War raised a question about the legitimacy of the socialist system and caused problems in terms of security for North Korea. In this context, words and writings of a unitary actor of North Korea, Kim Jong-il, can be indicative of his thinking relating to changes in the security environment before and after the collapse of socialism. In this regard, one can assume that his concerns could be reflected in North Korean policies. To be specific, through military-first politics, North Korea could concentrate its scarce resources to the military sector. On the other hand, through the development of nuclear weapons, North Korea could have a deterrence capability against the growing South Korean conventional military capabilities and the Bush administration's hardline policy of defining North Korea as part of an axis of evil (see Table 2).

Table 2. Motives for the Policies Based on Security Concerns

Interest	Motives for Military-First Politics	Motives for Developing Nuclear Weapons
Changes in security environment relating to the collapse of socialism	To concentrate North Korea's scarce resources to the military	To have a deterrence capability against the South Korean conventional military forces and U.S. hardline policy

1. Changes in the Security Environment

As noted previously, the end of the Cold War raised a question about the legitimacy of the socialist system and caused problems in terms of security.[128] First of all, the collapse of the communist countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was an indirect example of the future of the North Korean regime. In the late 1980s, anti-socialist waves began to rise in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. After the emergence of the non-communist government in Poland in 1989, Communist dictatorship ended in Hungary,

[128] Woo, "Songun Politics and the Political Weakness of the Military in North Korea," 255.

Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.[129] Subsequently, the maverick Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu, who had a special relationship with Kim Il-sung, was overthrown and executed by the Romanian people, and East German leader Erich Honecker, another special European friend, was deposed as well.[130] A North Korean defector Hwang Jang-yop, the founder of the North Korean Juche ideology, recalls in his memoirs that the unification of East and West Germany shook North Korean policymakers who were in a similar situation.[131] Particularly, on November 6, 1991, the Soviet Union, which was the center of the socialist system, was dissolved and dispersed into 15 sovereign states.[132] As such, the collapse of the communist countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union sparked intense speculation that Kim's family and its regime would be the next.[133]

Also, for North Korea, finding substitutes for its military products, which had been mostly provided by the Soviet Union, was a hard challenge.[134] Under this circumstance, the rapid growth of the South Korean conventional military capabilities made the situation even worse. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the process of attracting massive investment from South Korea, Russia declared that it would reduce its military aid to North Korea and support the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.[135] This situation forced

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129 Kyeong Sub Oh, "Seon-Gun-Jeong-Chi-Wa Wi-Gi-Gwan-Li-Che-Je-Ui Byeon-Hwa ["North Korean Military-First Politics and Changes of Its Crisis Management System"]," *National Strategy* 15, no. 4 (2009): 143.

130 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 218.

131 Jang-yop Hwang, "Na-Neun Yeog-Sa-Ui Jin-Li-Leul Bo-Ass-Da: Hwang Jang-yop Hoegorok" ["I Saw the Truth of the History"], (Seoul, Korea: Hanul, 1999), 235–237.

132 Oh, "Seon-Gun-Jeong-Chi-Wa Wi-Gi-Gwan-Li-Che-Je-Ui Byeon-Hwa ["North Korean Military-First Politics and Changes of Its Crisis Management System"]," 143.

133 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 218.

134 Nicholas Eberstadt, Marc Rubin, and Albina Tretyakova, "The Collapse of Soviet and Russian Trade with the DPRK, 1989–1993: Impact and Implication," *The Korean Journal of National Unification* 4 (1995): 102, http://www.kinu.or.kr/pyxis-api/1/digital-files/ab7742d2-e80f-4fa4-a085-7c5f1ffcca1d.

135 Choongbae Lee and Michaelj. Bradshaw, "South Korean Economic Relations with Russia," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 38, no. 8 (1997): 466–467, https://doi.org/10.1080/10889388.1997.10641058; Victor D. Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction: Badges, Shields, or Swords?," *Political Science Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2002): 218, https://doi.org/10.2307/798181.

North Korea to protect itself without support from alliances.[136] The North Korean reorganization, redeployment, and reinforcement in its military sector, beginning from 1990, came in this context.[137] In addition, South Korea's rapid development in its conventional military forces had worsened the imbalance between the two Koreas.[138] To be specific, while North Korea's conventional forces continued to field T-72 tanks and Mig-29 fighters, which represented technologies from before the 1990s, South Korea's forces, through continuous investment to its military sector, had developed dominant tanks and imported advanced fighter jets from the United States.[139]

Furthermore, South Korea's efforts to normalize diplomatic relations with the communist countries, which was part of South Korean northern politics (Nordpolitk), added to a sense of crisis for North Korea. Roh Tae-woo, the 13th president of South Korea, sought to isolate North Korea by normalizing diplomatic relations with North Korea's allies, including the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern European communist countries.[140] At that time, Gorbachev of the Soviet Union also wanted to gain economic benefits by normalizing relations with South Korea, based on the national interests of Russia in the economic area rather than socialist ideology. To be specific, South Korea promised the Soviet Union assistance for opening markets, investment in the Siberian region, and providing $3 billion worth of loans for purchasing South Korean goods.[141] Gorbachev's interest in opening markets of the Soviet Union featured in his UN speech—"[t]oday, the preservation of any kind of 'closed' society is hardly possible"—must have chilled North

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136 Andrew. Scobell and John M. Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat: Pyongyang's Conventional Forces, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Ballistic Missiles*, Demystifying North Korea (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), 35; Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction," 218.

137 Scobell and Sanford, *North Korea's Military*, 35.

138 Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction," 218.

139 Chung-in Moon and Sangkeun Lee, "Military Spending and the Arms Race on the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Perspective* 33, no. 4 (2009): 83–85.

140 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 187.

141 Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction," 218; Lee and Bradshaw, "South Korean Economic Relations with Russia," 466–467; Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 210.

Korean policymakers.[142] In relation to China, South Korean northern politics was consistent with Deng Xiaoping's national strategy in pursuit of market-oriented reforms, and in this context, the establishment of diplomatic ties with China was made in 1992.[143] Also, after Western-oriented officials took over government, those Eastern European countries' relations with South Korea normalized on the condition of receiving loans from South Korea.[144] As such, the northern politics of South Korea isolated and excluded North Korea from supporters in the international community, and accordingly, it added a sense of crisis to North Korea.[145]

2. North Korean Perception of the Security Environment

These changes in the security environment raised North Korea's security concerns, and Kim Jong-il's words and writing can be indicative of these concerns. From the viewpoint that Kim Jong-il was a unitary actor of North Korea who has a coherent utility function of value, it is necessary to examine Kim Jong-il's perception of the environment in order to look at his structure of values and the motives for his policy decisions. Yet, it is not easy to grasp his personal perception of the surroundings as his words and writings may conflict with his actual intentions, and as he might deliberately avoid mentioning some topics. Nevertheless, his words and writings, which repeatedly treat certain subjects, can be indicative of his thinking. In this regard, the security perspective assumes that the most important value for a state is survival, and Kim Jong-il's words and writings reveal his interests relating to the survival of North Korea.

In terms of security concerns, Kim Jong-il's words and writings in the 1990s reflect his concerns about changes in the security environment before and after the collapse of socialism. During the period of the collapse of socialism, he understood international

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142 Oberdorfer, 198.

143 Oberdorfer, 188.

144 Oberdorfer, 190.

145 Victor Cha, "Realism, Liberalism, and the Durability of the U.S.-South Korean Alliance," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 7 (1997): 616–617, https://doi.org/10.2307/2645511.

relations as a "sharp confrontation" between socialism and imperialism.[146] For example, in 1990, he described that "[t]oday, owing to the vicious anti-socialist moves of the imperialists, a sharp confrontation is going on between socialism and imperialism in the international area."[147] Also, he explained that "[r]ecently the imperialists are getting more and more frantic in their attempt to frustrate socialism."[148] Especially, his talk with the senior officials of the central committee of the KWP in 1992 revealed his potential concerns over the collapse of socialism:

> Over the recent years the imperialists and reactionaries have been resorting to every scheme possible to stifle our country, … we must approach the present situation on an optimistic point of view and staunchly defend the cause of socialism.[149]

Subsequently, after the end of the Cold War, he described that the United States implements a policy of power disguised as peace. For example, he explained that the United States "is invariably resorting to the policy of power, threatening us with ceaseless military exercises and aggressive maneuvers and instigating the south Korean rulers to war provocation hullabaloo."[150] Therefore, this evidence shows that Kim Jong-il had one set of specified goals, which prioritized survival.

3. Major Motivations for North Korean Policies

The evidence shows Kim Jong-il's perception of the environment, his major motivation for the policies, can partly be explained by the security perspective. Under the

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[146] Chong-il. Kim, *Socialism of Our Country is a Socialism of Our Style as the Embodiment of the Juche Idea: Speech Delivered to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Worker's Party of Korea* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1990), 1, http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/107.pdf.

[147] Kim, 1.

[148] Chong-il. Kim, *On Some Problems of the Ideological Foundation of Socialism: Speech Delivered to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Worker's Party of Korea* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1990), 1, http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/104.pdf.

[149] Chong-il. Kim, *Socialism Is the Life of Our People: Talk with the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea November 14, 1992* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1992), 1, http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/558.pdf.

[150] Chong-il. Kim, *Let Us Carry Out the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's Instructions for National Reunification* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1997), 9.

security crises during the period, through military-first politics, he could concentrate scarce resources on the military sector. Also, through the development of nuclear weapons, he could have a deterrence capability against the growing South Korean conventional military capabilities and the Bush administration's hardline policy of defining North Korea as part of an axis of evil.

a. Military-First Politics

Based on the security perspective, North Korea needed to concentrate its scarce resources on the military sector through military-first politics. The dissolution of military alliances after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the growing capabilities of the South Korean conventional military forces came as security crises for North Korea.[151] Russia declared its intention to reduce military aid to North Korea in an effort to attract South Korean commercial investment,[152] and South Korea, based on U.S. support, came to possess dominant tanks and aircraft in comparison with those of North Korea.[153] Also, without the support of the Soviet Union, the North Korean government could not sustain its military supplies. For example, according to the official figures on the North Korean composition of output published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), total output in 1996 was roughly halved in comparison with that in 1992.[154] Kim Jong-il's remark, "there were people who saw the harsh reality and were concerned about whether socialism could be built to the end," shows that high-ranking officials of the party and the military were in great turmoil.[155] Thus, in response to the security crises, through military-first politics, Kim Jong-il could concentrate North Korea's scarce resources on the military sector.

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[151] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 215–222.

[152] Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction," 218; Lee and Bradshaw, "South Korean Economic Relations with Russia," 469.

[153] Moon and Lee, "Military Spending and the Arms Race on the Korean Peninsula," 83–85.

[154] Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang, "Rigorous Speculation: The Collapse and Revival of the North Korean Economy," *World Development* 28, no. 10 (2000): 1771, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(00)00057-7.

[155] Oh, "Seon-Gun-Jeong-Chi-Wa Wi-Gi-Gwan-Li-Che-Je-Ui Byeon-Hwa" ["North Korean Military-First Politics and Changes of Its Crisis Management System"], 147.

b. Nuclear Weapons Development

Also, based on the security perspective, North Korea needed a deterrence capability against the South Korea's growing conventional military capabilities and the Bush administration's hardline policy of defining North Korea as part of an axis of evil. During the Kim Jong-il era, when there was rapid development of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, security threats were on the rise for that country. The collapse of the Soviet Union at the time, when South Korean conventional forces were being augmented based on an alliance with the United States, made North Korea lose the upper hand in its conventional forces.[156] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the process of attracting massive investment from South Korea, Russia declared that it would reduce its military aid to North Korea.[157] In addition, South Korea's rapid qualitative development in military forces had worsened the imbalance between the two Koreas.[158] North Korea's reorganization, redeployment, and reinforcement in its military sector, beginning from 1990, came in this context.[159]

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[156] Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 49; Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea," 14; Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," 496;

[157] Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction," 218; Lee and Bradshaw, "South Korean Economic Relations with Russia," 469.

[158] Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction," 218; Jae-Jung Suh, "Blitzkrieg or Sitzkrieg? Assessing a Second Korean War," *Pacifica Review: Peace, Security & Global Change* 11, no. 2 (1999): 156–157, https://doi.org/10.1080/14781159908412877; M. O'Hanlon, "Stopping a North Korean Invasion - Why Defending South Korea Is Easier than the Pentagon Thinks," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998): 142–143, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539242. Meanwhile, in 2004, the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis (KIDA) under the MND executed an assessment on the capabilities of the two Koreas' militaries to conduct a war following an instruction of the South Korean National Security Council (NSC). The assessment was reported to have used the Situation Force Scoring (SFS) method of the RAND Corporation, and it assessed that the South Korean military is somewhat superior in air power but inferior in army and naval power. However, this assessment was criticized for the fact that the scoring system remains in a comparison of sheer firepower and that indexes can be manipulated. See "Ju-Yo Yeon-Hab-Nyu-Seu" [Headlines], *Yonhap News*, August 30, 2004, https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=001&aid=0000748052; Moon and Lee, "Military Spending and the Arms Race on the Korean Peninsula," 85–86; "Cheong-Wa-Dae Ha-Myeong Nam-Bug-Han Gun-Sa-Lyeog Bi-Gyo-Neun o-Lyu Tu-Seong-" [Blue House Ordered Comparison of the Military Capabilities of Two Koreas is Full of Errors"], *Nocut News*, December 1, 2004, https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=079&aid=0000017043; Patrick D. Allen, *Situational Force Scoring: Accounting for Combined Arms Effect in Aggregate Combat Models* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992).

[159] Scobell and Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat*, 35.

The Bush administration, unlike the former Clinton administration, maintained a hardline policy toward North Korea. This stance is revealed in President Bush's mention during a meeting with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung at the White House that he "look[s] forward to, at some point in the future, having a dialogue with the North Koreans, but that any negotiation would require complete verification of the terms of a potential agreement."[160] Also, in the President's 2002 State of the Union speech, he announced that North Korea is a part of "the axis of evil," and subsequently his Secretary of State nominee Condoleezza Rice referred to countries like North Korea as "outposts of tyranny."[161] In this context, the invasion of Iraq a year later showed that North Korea could also be invaded by the United States in the near future.[162] North Korea's fear was apparent in an invitation to U.S. nuclear experts in 2004, which was North Korea's effort to convince the international community that it has a deterrent capability by allowing them to see its nuclear facilities.[163] Therefore, by developing nuclear weapons, North Korea could have a deterrence capability against the South Korean conventional military forces and the Bush administration's hardline policy of defining North Korea as part of an axis of evil.[164]

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the RAM, this chapter has demonstrated that the two major policies of North Korea—military-first politics and the development of nuclear weapons—were, to a large degree, the result of Kim Jong-il's security concerns. Kim Jong-il behaved as a unified national actor as he monopolized power under the supreme leader system, and this makes North Korea fit well into the RAM, which assumes a unified national actor who has

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160 Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

161 Rennack, *North Korea Economic Sanctions*, 2.

162 Rennack, 2; Seymour Hersh, "The Cold Test (report on Nuclear Weapons Development Programs of North Korea and Pakistan)," *The New Yorker* 78, no. 44 (2003): 47, http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/233145625?accountid=12702.

163 Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 46.

164 Cha and Kang, "The Debate over North Korea," 232; Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," 48; Harrison, "The Missiles of North Korea," 23; Hughes, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons," 82; Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 85; Thayer, "The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Utility of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," 496.

a coherent utility function of value-maximizing.[165] In this regard, Kim Jong-il's words and writings support the interpretation that he could act on behalf of North Korea's national interests, which prioritized survival, and that this prioritization of interests affected his policy decision-making with relative consistency. Therefore, based on this idea and the North Korean security crises at the time, the most influential motivation for those two major policies could be partly explained by Kim Jong-il's own security concerns. Under the security crises, Kim Jong-il needed to concentrate North Korea's scarce resources on the military sector through military-first politics. Also, he needed to have a nuclear deterrence capability against the South Korean conventional military forces and the Bush administration's hardline policy of defining North Korea as part of an axis of evil.

Although Kim Jong-il monopolized power in North Korea, however, some evidence shows that his interests did not always coincide with national interests, which prioritize the state's survival. For example, it is hard to explain a large number of purges, which were implemented by Kim Jong-il after the death of his father, based only on North Korea's national interests. Also, it is not easy to understand how North Korea's national interests were related to the purpose of investigating and punishing North Korean people by military agencies under the banner of military-first politics. Such evidence indicates that Kim Jong-il's decision-making process could have been based on his own political interests domestically even though he possessed unchallenged authority in North Korea. In this regard, the next chapter investigates the motivations for military-first politics and the nuclear weapons program, based on the domestic political perspective.

[165] Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 23–27; Smith, "Bad, Mad, Sad or Rational Actor," 614–616.

III. THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although the security perspective argues that Kim Jong-il behaved as a unified rational actor of North Korea seeking that state's survival as North Korea's primary national interest under the anarchic international system, there is some evidence that his own domestic political interests could have played a more important role in his prioritization of interests. For example, after the death of his father, Kim Jong-il purged a large number of officials and people and enhanced control over the people's thoughts and movement. These examples demonstrate that his interests did not always coincide with North Korea's national interests and that his priorities were also related to domestic political interests. In this regard, his words and writings also reveal some of the truth about his interests in solving domestic political issues, and these interests could have played a role in the case of developing nuclear weapons. Thus, this chapter demonstrates that North Korea's nuclear weapons program significantly resulted from Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests and that these motives, rather than security concerns, could have played a somewhat more influential role in that program (see Table 3).

Table 3. Explanation of Policies from the Domestic Political Perspective

Basis	Kim Jong-il monopolized power under the supreme leader system enabling the direct translation of his preferences into policy	
Priority of Interests	North Korea does not fit into the RAM in that it is not a unitary actor and has ***internal factors as a complex system***	
	Survival is the most important interest of a state. Yet, North Korea's national interests do ***not coincide*** with those of Kim Jong-il, and, in this regard, his words and writings show his own interests ***being driven by domestic political incentives***	
Motives for the policies	Military-first politics and the development of nuclear weapons were results of a relatively coherent utility function, in which Kim Jong-il values domestic political interests	
	Military-first politics: to build a power base, to manage the economic crisis, and to strengthen control of the movement and thinking of the North Korean people	Nuclear weapons development: to utilize the programs as direct or indirect sources of money and a useful pretext for legitimacy

A. A LIMITATION OF THE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The explanation of the security perspective has a limitation in that some of the North Korean policies implemented by Kim Jong-il cannot be explained well based on North Korea's national interests. As Chapter II discussed, Kim Jong-il was a unitary national actor insofar as he monopolized power under the supreme leader system, and he could behave on behalf of North Korea's national interests. In this regard, North Korea fits into the RAM, which assumes a unified national actor who has a coherent utility function of value-maximizing.[166] Accordingly, as his words and writing showed, he could have been trying to find a way to ensure North Korea's survival in the anarchic international system by implementing military-first politics and developing nuclear weapons. Yet, the security perspective is only partly convincing in that Kim Jong-il's interests might not have consistently coincided with North Korea's national interests even though he monopolized power in North Korea at the time.

From this point of view, there is some evidence showing that Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests, in contrast to North Korea's national interests, could have played a more important role in his prioritization of interests. After Kim Jong-il took power, he purged numerous officials and even ordinary North Korean citizens. To be specific, Kim Jong-il formed the so-called intensified investigation division (Shimhuajo) and purged about 25,000 people over three years by accusing them of espionage, in an effort to remove complaints among North Korean officials and people during the economic crisis.[167] In 1997, as a result of the intensified investigation, Kim Jong-il executed General Lee Bong-won, deputy head of the KPA's General Political Bureau, and Suh Kwan-hui, the agriculture secretary.[168]

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166 Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 23–27; Smith, "Bad, Mad, Sad or Rational Actor," 614–616.

167 Woo Seok Choi, "Gim-Jeong-Eun-Ui to-Sa-Gu-Paeng Jeon-Lyag ... 20nyeon Jeon a-Beo-Ji Gim-Jeong-Il Sim-Hwa-Jo Sa-Geon-Gwa Pan-Bag-" ["Kim Jong-Un's Strategy of 'Killing the Dog after Hunting Is over' ... Resembles the Case of Kim Jong-Il's Intensified Investigation"], *Monthly Chosun*, November 11, 2017, http://monthly.chosun.com/client/mdaily/daily_view.asp?idx=2173&Newsnumb=2017112173.

168 Jongseok Woo, "Kim Jong-Il's Military-First Politics and beyond: Military Control Mechanisms and the Problem of Power Succession," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 2 (2014): 123, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.04.002.

Furthermore, Kim Jong-il enhanced the government authority on controlling the North Korean people's movement and thoughts. As food rationing deteriorated after 1992, more and more people defected to China in search of food. Accordingly, through the inclusion of inspection organizations in the NDC, the core institution of the Kim Jong-il era, he strengthened the government's control over the daily lives of the North Korean people. To be specific, he dispatched the military to farms, coal mines, and train stations to control people's movement. In addition to this, the military agencies gained the authority to investigate and punish North Korean people and implemented the authority. These policies cannot be explained well based on North Korea's national interests, and this means that Kim Jong-il's interests did not coincide with North Korea's national interests even though he was a unified actor in North Korea.

B. DOMESTIC POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS FOR THE POLICIES

The domestic political perspective is persuasive in that it overcomes the limitation of the security perspective's explanation. There were domestic political crises in the 1990s caused by the collapse of socialism, the sudden death of Kim Il-sung, and natural disasters. Words and writings of Kim Jong-il under the circumstances can be indicative of his thinking related to domestic politics: in terms of politics, they show his interests in inheriting Kim Il-sung's guiding principles; in terms of the economy, they reflect his interests in the current economic situation and the construction of the socialist economy; in terms of society, they reveal his interests in preventing domestic turmoil following the collapse of socialism. Based on these concerns, the motivations of the North Korean policies can be understood by the domestic political perspective. Through military-first politics, Kim Jong-il could have utilized the military to build his own power base; to shift the responsibility of economic crisis to external factors and to strengthen the monitoring function on economic activities; and to strengthen its control over the North Korean people. Similarly, Kim Jong-il could have used the nuclear weapons program as a lucrative source of money and a useful pretext for legitimizing his regime, which had given its people only severe starvation since it was established (see Table 4).

Table 4. Motives for Policies Based on the Domestic Political Interests

Area: Interest	Motives for Military-First Politics	Motives for Developing Nuclear Weapons
Politics: inheriting Kim Il-sung's guidance principles	To stabilize the political situation and to build a power base	-
Economy: current economic crisis and the construction of a socialist economy	To turn people's attention from the harsh reality and to strengthen the monitoring function of economic activities of the residents	To utilize as direct or indirect sources of money required for legitimizing the regime
Society: preventing domestic turmoil after the collapse of socialism	To strengthen control over the movement and thoughts of the North Korean people	To build legitimacy by confronting the United States

1. Changes in the Domestic Political Environment

During the 1990s, there were several domestic political crises in North Korea. First of all, the collapse of socialism led to the economic crisis by the reduction of outside assistance from communist countries. Also, due to the sudden death of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il needed to justify himself as the legitimate successor of the so-called Great Leader Kim Il-sung, the first supreme leader of North Korea. Furthermore, two catastrophic floods followed by drought caused a huge number of displaced people, destroyed agricultural land, and triggered severe famine. These natural disaster consequences eroded the North Korean government's control over the North Korean population's movement and thoughts.

a. The Collapse of Socialism

The collapse of socialism aggravated the North Korean economic crisis by reducing outside assistance from communist countries, including the Soviet Union.[169] Despite North Korea's declaration of Juche ideology, which means self-reliance, the country had consistently relied upon outside aid throughout its history, and the Soviet Union played the

[169] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 122; Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 4–5.

role of the most important benefactor.[170] At that time, the Soviet Union supplied North Korea with "most of its coal and refined oil and one-third of its steel," and such trade accounted for more than half of the North Korean imports annually.[171] With the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the decrease in imports from the Soviet Union in 1991 amounted to 40 percent of the North Korean total annual imports, and the sum of total imports in 1992 and 1993 was only 10 percent of the average imports from 1987 to 1990 (see Figure 1).[172] Given that the foundation of North Korean industry had relied on materials and technologies provided by the Soviet Union, the collapse might have had an impact proportional to the value of the missing inputs on North Korean industrial production.[173] Although China emerged as "the primary supplier of imported food" for North Korea after the Soviet Union's collapse, offsetting some of the decreases in trade between the Soviet Union and North Korea, China also had reduced its support since 1994 (see Figure 2).[174]

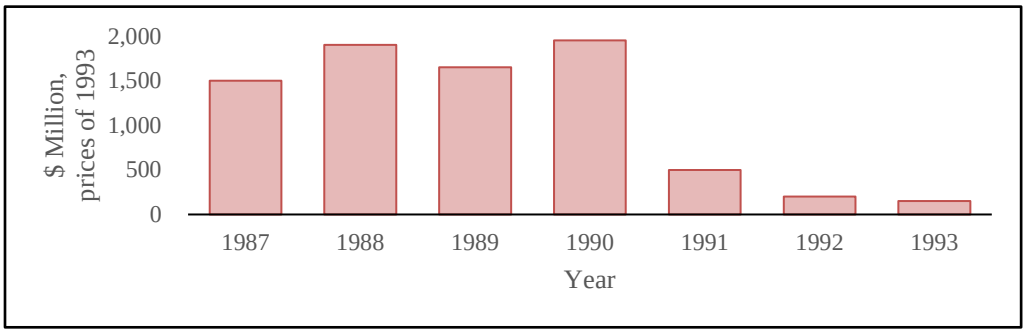

Figure 1. Exports of Soviet and the Russian Federation to North Korea, 1987–1993[175]

[170] Noland, 4.

[171] Noland, 4.

[172] Eberstadt, Rubin, and Tretyakova, "The Collapse of Soviet and Russian Trade with the DPRK, 1989–1993," 95 and 98.

[173] Eberstadt, Rubin, and Tretyakova, 102.

[174] Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 5.

[175] Adapted from Eberstadt, Rubin, and Tretyakova, "The Collapse of Soviet and Russian Trade with the DPRK, 1989–1993," 95.

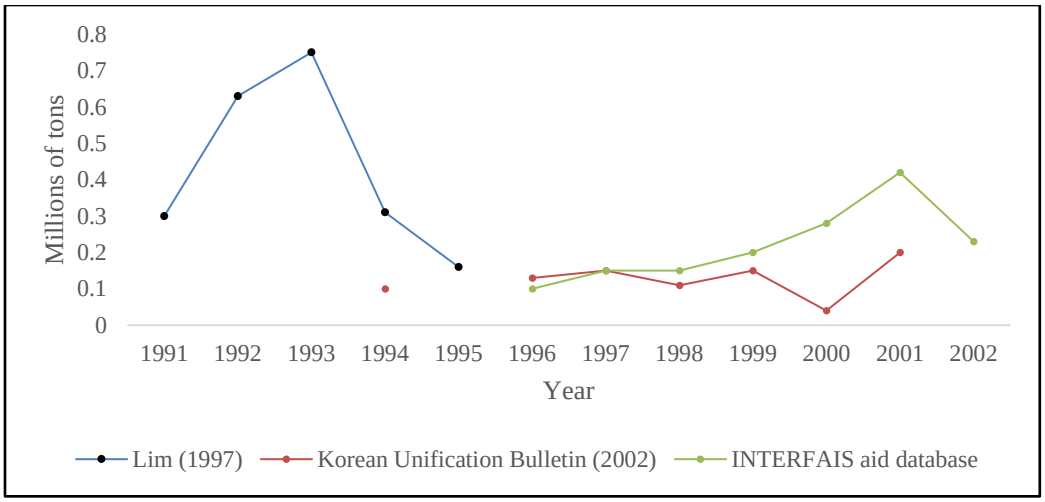

Figure 2. Food Imports from China, 1991–2002[176]

b. The Sudden Death of Kim Il-sung

Another significant domestic political concern in North Korea was that, due to the sudden death of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il needed to legitimize his standing as successor to the so-called Great Leader Kim Il-sung, the first supreme leader of North Korea. Not only had Kim Il-sung monopolized power as a supreme leader from the birth of North Korea to the time of his death, but he also had been "the object of a personality cult whose intensity and magnitude defy imagination."[177] For example, North Korean publications depicted Kim Il-sung's death on a cosmic level to North Korean people, using language such as "the giant star fell from the sky," "the earth's rotation stopped," "the earth's weight without the supreme leader has become lighter," and "the sun of the sky has been extinguished."[178]

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[176] Adapted from Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 42.

[177] Byung Chul Koh, "Political Leadership in North Korea: Toward a Conceptual Understanding of Kim Il Sung's Leadership Behavior," *Korean Studies* 2 (1978): 139.

[178] Yun Hee Kim, "The State Chiefs Eternal Life and the Politics of Nostalgia: Focus on the Collective Memory of Kim Il-Sung and the Execution of the Dying Instruction," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 56, no. 2 (2016): 215–216, http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE06702217.

Outside observers often described Kim Jong-il in stark contrast to his father.[179] They depicted Kim Il-sung as "a guerrilla fighter, the founder of the state, and a charismatic, outgoing, outspoken figure until the day he died."[180] In contrast, they described Kim Jong-il as a person who "grew up in privilege from his teenage years, had never served a day in the military until he was named supreme commander of the [Korean] People's Army in December 1991, wore his hair in an artsy pompadour, and was notably uncomfortable amid the roar of the crowd."[181] These contrasting characteristics could explain the reason for the emergence of several factions, most of which were not loyal to him when Kim Jong-il became a supreme leader.[182] Therefore, it was necessary for Kim Jong-il to become the legitimate successor to the so-called Great Leader Kim Il-sung, rather than being just his son.[183]

In this context, despite the long-standing efforts of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il to legitimize the succession, several purges after the death of Kim Il-sung indirectly show that the legitimacy of the succession was still in doubt. Kim Jong-il had been running a regime-level campaign to build his image as the legitimate successor since 1973, because he did not have characteristics recognized by the North Korean people as the legitimate successor, except for his father-to-son relationship with Kim Il-sung.[184] This campaign legitimized the succession based on the argument that the self-reliance idea pioneered by Kim Il-sung needed to be completed by Kim Jong-il, the most faithful person of the younger generation.[185] However, this legitimization led to resistance from the older elite, who were not included in this younger generation,[186] and accordingly, it was a key point for Kim

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179 Kong Dan Oh, *Leadership Change in North Korean Politics: The Succession to Kim Il Sung* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1988), 7.

180 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 346.

181 Oberdorfer, 346.

182 Gause, *North Korean Civil-Military Trends*, v–vi.

183 Oh, *Leadership Change in North Korean Politics*, 55.

184 Oh, 7 and 24.

185 Kim, "The State Chiefs Eternal Life and the Politics of Nostalgia," 219; Oh, *Leadership Change in North Korean Politics*, 26.

186 Oh, 39.

Jong-il "to establish his own credentials in order to neutralize broader expressions of political dissent."[187] In this regard, Jo Myong-rok, Kim Il-chol, Ri Yong-moo, Kim Young-chun, and Baek Hak-rim were newly appointed as members of the NDC and were considered as key figures of the KPA that assisted Kim Jong-il.[188]

Nevertheless, Kim Jong-il implemented a large number of purges after the death of Kim Il-sung. In 1995, there was a coup attempt by the Sixth Army Corps in Hamkyung Province, which was probably assisted by the adjacent Seventh Army Corps. The conspiracy was revealed by the Sixth Corps commander, however, and Kim Jong-il rewarded him with a promotion and disbanded the Sixth Corps.[189] Also, in 1997, General Lee Bong-won, deputy head of the KPA's General Political Bureau, and Suh Kwan-hui, agriculture secretary, were reportedly executed as a result of the so-called intensified investigation.[190] Kim Jong-il had formed the intensified investigation division and, over the course of three years, purged 25,000 people by accusing them of espionage, quashing complaints among the North Korean people and officials after the economic crisis.[191] Subsequently, to shift the blame, Chae Moon-deok, who led the team, was also purged in 2000, when Kim Jong-il identified him as a man blinded by ambition who killed his comrades.[192] Furthermore, in 1998, Kim Yong-ryong, deputy head of the State Security Agency, was purged for criticizing the Kim Jong-il regime.[193]

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187 Snyder, "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival," 519.

188 Hwang Yoon, "Gim-Jeong-Il Jeong-Gwon-Ui Ju-Yo Gun-Bu-in-Mul Byeon-Hwa" ["Key Figures in the Kim Jong-Il Regime"], *The Association of Unification Strategy* 9, no. 3 (2009): 380.

189 McEachern, *Inside the Red Box*, 88.

190 Woo, "Kim Jong-Il's Military-First Politics and beyond," 123.

191 Choi, "Gim-Jeong-Eun-Ui to-Sa-Gu-Paeng Jeon-Lyag ... 20nyeon Jeon a-Beo-Ji Gim-Jeong-Il Sim-Hwa-Jo Sa-Geon-Gwa Pan-Bag-" ["Kim Jong-Un's Strategy of 'Killing the Dog after Hunting Is over' ... Resembles the Case of Kim Jong-Il's Intensified Investigation"].

192 Choi.

193 Woo, "Kim Jong-Il's Military-First Politics and Beyond," 123.

c. Natural Disasters

The last significant domestic political concern in North Korea was related to natural disasters. Two catastrophic floods followed by drought caused a huge number of displaced people, destroyed agricultural land, and led to severe famine.[194] These developments eroded the North Korean government's control over its people. In terms of food supply, successive floods in July and August 1995 exacerbated the suffering of the North Korean people, who had already faced starvation caused by the structural problems of agriculture. Not only does North Korea have relatively scarce and infertile arable land, it had used environmentally unsustainable techniques to maximize output, and this caused a structural problem of food production.[195] At that time, North Korea announced the total amount of damage caused by the floods was $15 billion, including 5.4 million displaced people, 330,000 hectares of destroyed farmland, and 1.9 million tons of lost grain.[196]

Although the international community considered the estimation of the flood damage by the North Korean government to be exaggerated,[197] the natural disasters were serious enough to make North Korean starvation extremely acute. For example, the UN estimated that the floods had left 500,000 displaced people.[198] Additionally, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that a half million children and pregnant women were starving due to the floods, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) predicted that 500,000 people would suffer from hunger by that autumn.[199] Although there is a large discrepancy between the estimations of the North Korean government and those of the international community,

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194 Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 6.

195 Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Famine in North Korea," 743.

196 Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 6.

197 Heather Smith, "The Food Economy: Catalyst for Collapse?," in *Economic Integration of the Korean Peninsula*, ed. Marcus Noland (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1999), 54, http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.164.6394&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

198 Noland, "Famine and Reform in North Korea," 6.

199 Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang, "Famine in North Korea: Causes and Cures," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49, no. 4 (2001): 746, https://doi.org/10.1086/452523.

natural disasters at the time were serious as studies on North Korean starvation during this period assess that at least a hundred thousand to millions had died due to the famine.[200]

This problem of food supply made it difficult for the North Korean government to maintain control over the people's movement and thoughts. To be specific, about 400,000 of North Korean people moved across the northern border to China in search of food due to the famine from 1995 to 1997.[201] The UN and the United States also estimate that between 30,000 and 50,000 North Korean refugees settled in China during this period.[202] This uncontrollable movement of North Korean people across the northern border posed an insidiously spreading political problem. At that time, the North Korean government's propaganda for its people had claimed that impoverished life in North Korea was still better than that in China, which was damaged by civil war, epidemic, and famine.[203]

On the other hand, North Korean people who crossed the border seeking food gradually realized that the propaganda was a lie as they saw China's prosperous reality. A North Korean refugee who tried to depict this situation said that "[o]ur first border crossing is a grammar school degree [in economics], the second time you visit China is a high school diploma, and the third and fourth trips are college and graduate degrees in reality. They have been lying to us all these years."[204] In addition, a North Korean policy of encouraging these refugees to return from China for registration and voting in the national election further undermined popular support.[205] In other words, refugees with "graduate degrees," who realized the economic reality of North Korea, had spread the truth to their families and neighbors, which significantly damaged the people's support for the North Korean

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200 Andrew S. Natsios, *The Politics of Famine in North Korea*, Special Report (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1999), 6; Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Famine in North Korea," 741; W. Courtland Robinson et al., "Mortality in North Korean Migrant Households: A Retrospective Study," *The Lancet* 354, no. 9175 (1999): 291, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(99)02266-7.

201 Bruce W. Bennett and Jennifer Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea: Military Missions and Requirements," *International Security* 36, no. 2 (2011): 97, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00057; Robinson et al., "Mortality in North Korean Migrant Households," 293.

202 Bennett and Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea," 97.

203 Natsios, *The Politics of Famine in North Korea*, 11.

204 Natsios, 11.

205 Natsios, 11.

regime. Various food riots and uprisings during this period indicate the North Korean government's loss of control.[206]

2. Perception of the Domestic Political Environment

As undertaken in the previous chapter, Kim Jong-il's words and writings can be indicative of his thinking related to his domestic political interests. In terms of politics, Kim Jong-il's words and writings in the 1990s show his interest in inheriting Kim Il-sung's guiding principles. After his father's death, he declared allegience to his father's guiding principles with some slogans, including "Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung is with us forever" and "let's be more thoroughly armed with the revolutionary ideas of Great Leader Comrade Kim Il-sung."[207] For another example, he declared that "[o]ur party will inherit and develop the idea and achievements of Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung faithfully and accomplish his cause down through generations."[208] Also, he claimed that "[w]e must carry out Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's instructions for national reunification and fulfill the responsibility and duty our generation has assumed before the country and nation."[209]

In terms of the economy, Kim Jong-il's writings reflect his interest in the current economic situation and the construction of the socialist economy. Mindful of the economic difficulties that worsened in the 1990s, Kim Jong-il acknowledged that socialism has a deficient aspect in material terms compared to capitalism. For example, he described that "[t]he socialist countries have incomparable advantages in economic development, but they are still relatively backward in the field of material life, compared to the developed

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[206] Kyung-Ae Park, "Explaining North Korea's Negotiated Cooperation with The U.S.," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 7 (1997): 631, https://doi.org/10.1525/as.1997.37.7.01p0262w; Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Famine in North Korea," 743–746.

[207] Kyo Deok Lee, *Gim-Jeong-Il-Seon-Jib Bun-Seog* [*Analysis on Kim Jong-Il's Selected Works*], vol. 11 (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2001), 63, http://repo.kinu.or.kr/bitstream/2015.oak/565/1/0000596496.pdf.

[208] Chong-il. Kim, *On Preserving the Juche Character and National Character of the Revolution and Construction* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1997), 20, http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/111.pdf.

[209] Kim, *Let Us Carry Out the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's Instructions for National Reunification*, 1.

capitalist countries."[210] Despite this, he explained that socialism is still superior to capitalism and that the transition to capitalism of socialist countries during the period of the collapse of socialism will ultimately fail. For example, he asserted that "[m]odern social democracy that opens up the road to a peaceful transition of socialism to capitalism will inevitably fail just like the former opportunism of all hues."[211] In this context, he emphasized efforts to construct the socialist economy:

> We must continuously invest great effort into the construction of the socialist economy, in order to further strengthen the country's economic power and steadily improve our people's standard of material life according to socialist demands.[212]

Finally, in terms of society, his words reveal his interest in preventing domestic turmoil following the collapse of socialism. For example, he asserted that "the imperialists and reactionaries are claiming that capitalism has triumphed and socialism has come to an end … [, and this] is causing ideological confusion among some people who do not understand the situation properly."[213] In this regard, he asserts the importance of ideological education, pointing out that the cause of the corruption of socialism in some countries is ideological corruption:

> The most serious lesson of the collapse of socialism in several countries is that the corruption of socialism begins with ideological corruption, and ... it is now imperative for us to awaken the popular masses ideologically and rouse them to struggle for socialism.[214]

In this context, he emphasized the Juche ideology and nationalism. He asserted that "[i]n order to thwart the dominationist machinations of the imperialists and reactionaries … we must maintain the Juche character of the revolutionary struggle and construction and

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[210] Kim, *On Some Problems of the Ideological Foundation of Socialism*, 16.

[211] Kim, 16.

[212] Chong-il. Kim, *Socialism Is a Science* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1994), 25, http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/106.pdf.

[213] Chong-il Kim, *The Historical Lesson in Building Socialism and the General Line of Our Party* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1992), 1, http://www.korea-dpr.com/e_library.html.

[214] Chong-il Kim, *Giving Priority to Ideological Work Is Essential for Accomplishing Socialism* (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1995), 1, http://www.korea-dpr.info/lib/101.pdf.

sustain their national character."[215] In sum, this evidence shows that Kim Jong-il had one set of specified goals, which prioritized his domestic political interests.

3. Major Motivations for the Policies

Based on Kim Jong-il's priorities, motivations for the North Korean policies can be understood from the domestic political perspective. Through military-first politics, Kim Jong-il utilized the military to build his own power base. With regard to longstanding severe poverty and starvation, he tried to turn its people's attention from the harsh reality to outside threats and strengthen the monitoring function of the economic activities of North Korea's residents. In terms of society, he strengthened the control over people's thoughts and movement. Meanwhile, the nuclear weapons program, in the face of the economic crisis that had worsened since the collapse of the Soviet Union, became a reliable source of money and a useful pretext for legitimizing the Kim Jong-il regime, which had given its people only severe starvation since the regime's establishment ten years earlier.

a. Military-First Politics

Kim Jong-il's priorities related to domestic political interests show that he could have used military-first politics as a means of building his own power base, managing the economic crisis, and strengthening control over North Koreans' movement and thoughts.

(1) Building Kim Jong-il's Power Base

In terms of politics, through military-first policies, Kim Jong-il likely utilized the military to build his own power base. He had no military experience, unlike Kim Il-sung, who was a guerrilla leader against the Japanese military in the 1930s and 1940s. So, to overcome this deficiency and to build his credibility as the future supreme leader, during the 1980s Kim Il-sung began putting his son, Kim Jong-il, in charge of some military positions, where the son could implement institutional control over the military.[216] Accordingly, the son was "made Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (December

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[215] Chong-il Kim, *On Preserving the Juche Character and National Character of the Revolution and Construction*, 1.

[216] Gause, *North Korean Civil-Military Trends*, 10–11.

1991), promoted to the rank of marshal (August 1992), and appointed chairman of the NDC (April 1993)."[217] Meanwhile, the military was under the control of the party during the Kim Il-sung era when he ruled North Korea as a premier.[218] Nevertheless, Kim Jong-il did not take over the position of premier even after the death of his father, and he retained the position of the chairman of the NDC.[219] By doing so, after his father's death Kim Jong-il promoted political stability by governing North Korea according to his dying father's instructions.[220]

Nevertheless, after placing those loyal to him in key positions of the NDC, in 1998, Kim Jong-il subsequently weakened the party's power and consolidated his own power base by formalizing the NDC's authority through revisions of the constitution, based on the logic of military-first politics.[221] This power transition succeeded in killing two birds with one stone because the party, which had previously led most of the North Korean policies, was losing its attraction among the North Korean people due to the economic crisis.[222] Although the revised constitution stipulates that the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) is "the highest organ of State power," the SPA Presidium President Kim Yong-nam declared in 1998 that the NDC's chairmanship is "the highest post of the state and controls all of the political, military, and economic capabilities of the republic."[223]

(2) Managing the Economic Crisis

At the same time, with regard to longstanding severe poverty and starvation, through military-first politics, Kim Jong-il seems to have tried to turn his people's attention from the harsh domestic conditions to outside threats and recover the country's economy. North Korea's arable land was scarce and less productive, and the country's use of

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217 Gause, 11.

218 Gause, 6.

219 Pinkston, "North Korea's Foreign Policy Towards the United States," 4.

220 Ministry of Unification, *Bug-Han Ji-Sig Sa-Jeon* [*Dictionary about North Korea*], 489–491.

221 Pinkston, "North Korea's Foreign Policy Towards the United States," 4.

222 Woo, "Songun Politics and the Political Weakness of the Military in North Korea," 255.

223 Kim, "North Korea's Nuclear Strategy and the Interface Between International and Domestic Politics," 59–60.

environmentally unsustainable techniques to maximize output from the given conditions resulted in slow-motion famine.[224] Especially, in the 1990s, fuel shortages caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the largest supplier, stopped agricultural equipment, and the natural disasters caused a drastic reduction in agricultural production.[225] In this context, the North Korean government began campaigns of "eat twice a day" and "skip meals one day a month" in the 1990s, and there were various food riots and uprisings.[226]

Accordingly, the government needed to turn its people's attention from such harsh conditions to external threats. A book published by the FLPH claimed that the fundamental cause of these hardships lay not in food shortages or economic problems but in the showdown with imperialist forces, and that the only way to survive was to construct military power through military-first politics.[227] Military-first politics in this view was a charade to make the people believe there was an external threat.

Also, through military-first politics, Kim Jong-il could monitor business management and control residents in the economic arena, where gradually the government's control had loosened after the black market emerged during the economic crisis. The suspension of food rationing due to the famine in the 1990s forced the North Korean people to operate small kitchen gardens, neglecting their duties on cooperative farms.[228] In other words, the North Korean people, to find ways to cope with the famine, found it necessary to sabotage the system as far as possible.[229] Under this circumstance,

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224 Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Famine in North Korea," 743.

225 Noland, Robinson, and Wang, 743.

226 Park, "Explaining North Korea's Negotiated Cooperation with The U.S.," 631; Noland, Robinson, and Wang, "Famine in North Korea," 743–746.

227 Ri, *Songun Politics in Korea*, 24.

228 Andrei Lankov, Seok Hyang Kim, and Inok Kwak, "Relying on One's Strength: The Growth of the Private Agriculture in Borderland Areas of North Korea," *Comparative Korean Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010): 335–337, http://nkeconwatch.com/nk-uploads/DPRK-agricultur-Lankov-Kim-Kwak1.pdf.

229 Lankov, Kim, and Kwak, 335.

the 8.3 movement (8.3 Mass Movement of Creation of People's Consumables),[230] which emerged in the course of the government's partial acceptance of marketization in the 1980s, degenerated into the spread of illegal transactions of goods other than permitted items and the advent of unofficial marketplaces.[231] In this context, more and more people began to sell illegally produced goods on the black market in an effort to overcome food shortages.[232] Accordingly, the ideological leadership of Kim Jong-il was damaged as the North Korean people were gradually incorporated into this ad-hoc structure of capitalism.[233]

Amid weakening control over the North Korean people, Kim Jong-il seems to have used military-first politics to break through the legitimation crisis by strengthening surveillance functions.[234] Kim Jong-il's speech at Kim Il-sung University in 1996 reveals his anxiety that marketization might lead to the collapse of his regime.[235] In this speech, Kim Jong-il expressed his concerns that if people were to start solving the food shortage on their own, farmers' markets would flourish, and that would eventually break the party's

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230 The North Korean government launched this movement on August 3, 1984, to address the shortage of household goods under Kim Jong-il's heavy industries-first policy. Through this movement, North Korean people could use waste materials to produce the government-prescribed daily necessities through a cottage industry and sell them in the local stores established by the government. Those who wanted to be a producer of the products had to register and get a permit. This movement is meaningful in that the North Korean government approved private production units other than the state-planned economy. See Ministry of Unification, *Bug-Han Ji-Sig Sa-Jeon* [*Dictionary about North Korea*], 680–682.

231 Sun-Woo Lee, "Military-First Politics and North Korean Economic Reform: The Logic of the Strained Parallelism," *Review of North Korean Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 140, http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE01831702.

232 Ministry of Unification, *Bug-Han Ji-Sig Sa-Jeon* [*Dictionary about North Korea*], 680–682.

233 Lee, "Military-First Politics and North Korean Economic Reform" 141.

234 Kyung Hoon Leem, "The North Korean Way of Economic Reform: The July Measures for Improving Economic Management," *Korean Political Research* 16, no. 1 (2007): 281–308, http://journal.kstudy.com/img/acrobat_ok.gif.

235 Lee, "Military-First Politics and North Korean Economic Reform," 143.

foundation and lead to the collapse of the regime.[236] In this context, under the banner of military-first politics, the military began to operate a number of trading companies managing domestic food distribution, deploy military personnel to construction sites, and establish new military farms.[237] By doing so, the military could monitor and control the management of corporations in the economic areas closely related to people's lives, including factories, collective farms, postal service, and transportation.[238] The fact that Kim Jong-il subjected the officials who were in charge of monitoring the residents to almost total rationing, compared to the general North Korean population, reveals his effort to maintain this monitoring system.[239]

b. Nuclear Weapons Development

Kim Jong-il's priorities related to domestic political interests show that he could have used the nuclear weapons program as a reliable source of money and a useful pretext for legitimizing his regime. In the face of the economic crisis that had worsened since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the nuclear weapons program became a good source of income, both directly and indirectly. On the one hand, Kim Jong-il could obtain badly-needed hard currency through missile exports to terrorist groups.[240] As North Korea advanced its nuclear weapons program, Kim Jong-il could recoup a certain amount of revenue by exporting nuclear or missile technologies. Although it is difficult to estimate

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236 Hyun-kyung Kim, "Gim-Jeong-Il Bi-Mil Yeon-Seol-Mun Gong-Gae, Sig-Lyang-Nan Sim-Gag Wi-Gi Pyo-Hyeon ["Kim Jong-Il's Secret Speech Was Released, Expressing a Serious Crisis of Food Shortage"], *MBC News*, March 19, 1997, http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1997/1764848 19482.html; Mi-suk Lee, "'bug Sig-Lyang-Nan Mu-Jeong-Bu-Sang-Tae u-Lyeo' Gim-Jeong-Il Bi-Mil-Yeon-Seol-Mun-Seo Ja-in" ["'Concerns for Anarchy after North Korea's Food Shortage' Kim Jong-Il Acknowledged in His Secret Speech"], *Munhua Ilbo*, March 19, 1997, http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=199703192001601; "Sig-Lyang-Nan-e Gong-Hwa-Gug Mu-Jeong-Bu-Sang-Tae - Gim-Jeong-Il Jag-Nyeon-1-2-Wol Bi-Gong-Sig-Yeon-Seol Yo-Ji" ["Anarchy of North Korea in Food Crisis - Kim Jong-Il's Informal Speech in December Last Year"], *Joongang Ilbo*, March 20, 1997, https://news.joins.com/article/3425229.

237 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 92; Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the Songun System," 51; Haggard, *Famine in North Korea*, 54.

238 Lee, "Military-First Politics and North Korean Economic Reform," 146.

239 Lee, 146.

240 Byman and Lind, "Pyongyang's Survival Strategy," 63; Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr., "North Korea and Support to Terrorism: An Evolving History," *Journal of Strategic Security* 3, no. 2 (2010): 51, https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.3.2.5.

North Korean missile exports due to that country's opaque economic activities, one U.S. military source estimates that North Korea earned $580 million from the export of missiles in 2001, and another study estimates that "missile sales could account for as much as a third of North Korea's export."[241]

Furthermore, the North Korean military sales could also include exportation of fissile materials, technologies, and experts for nuclear weapons development. For example, North Korea was involved in the construction of a nuclear reactor in Syria, which was destroyed by Israel.[242] There is evidence strongly indicating that Libya received uranium hexafluoride from North Korea in 2004.[243] Based on this history, it is reasonable to conclude that North Korea had clear intention to earn hard currency through exportation of its nuclear program. The possibility that North Korea might even export completed nuclear weapons was a realistic concern.

On the other hand, Kim Jong-il induced investment and aid from outside by floating the possibility of halting North Korea's nuclear program through negotiations. For example, from 1996 to 2002, between the Agreed Framework and suspicion about North Korea's development of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU), the United States provided more than $1 billion in food aid, concessional fuel oil, and medical supplies to North Korea.[244] Also, in connection with the first North-South Korea summit, Hyundai, a South Korean company, promised payments of approximately $800 million to North Korea by 2005 as a price for its North Korea tour programs, and the promise was probably upheld.[245]

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241 Pinkston, "Domestic Politics and Stakeholders in the North Korean Missile Development Program," 55.

242 Mike Hayden, "CIA Director Hayden Announces Findings on Covert Syrian Reactor," Central Intelligence Agency, April 24, 2008, https://www.cia.gov/news-information/press-releases-statements/press-release-archive-2008/cia-director-hayden-announces-findings-on-covert-syrian-reactor.html.

243 Jonathan Medalia, *Nuclear Terrorism: A Brief Review of Threats and Responses*, CRS Report No. RL32595 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2005), 3, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a437865.pdf.

244 Nicholas Eberstadt, "Why Hasn't North Korea Collapsed?," in *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival: The Politics of Regime Survival*, ed. Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim (Oxfordshire, England: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 522-526, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315702070.

245 Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "North Korea's External Economic Relations," (working paper, Peterson Institute for International Economic, 2007), 14. http://gps.ucsd.edu/_files/faculty/haggard/haggard_publications_north-korea.pdf.

Additionally, in 2002, South Korea provided the initial cost of $374 million to North Korea for the first phase of the construction for the Kaesong Industrial Complex, which aimed at lower labor costs for manufactured products by hiring North Korean people.[246] Furthermore, from 1995 to 2004, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries provided North Korea with development assistance amounting to approximately $1,529 million, including $1,151 million from France and $142 million from Great Britain.[247]

Kim Jong-il could have used the hard currency from these direct and indirect sources for legitimizing his regime. In 2001, the North Korea Working Group (NKWG) of the United States judged that Kim Jong-il had created a secret fund of between $300 and $500 million annually through illicit activities such as missile exports, counterfeiting, and drug smuggling.[248] The NKWG estimated that North Korea earned $1 billion through missile exports to Middle Eastern countries in the 1980s and 1990s.[249] According to the NKWG, with the secret funds, Kim purchased German-made Mercedes-Benz automobiles, Japanese-made home appliances, and French-made cognacs from Hong Kong and Macao and presented them to generals and key officials of the KWP.[250] The fact that Kim Jong-il annually purchased $720,000 worth of French cognac, which was $650 per each bottle,

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246 Dick K Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *The North Korean Economy: Leverage and Policy Analysis*, CRS Report No. RL32493 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013), 34, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32493.pdf.

247 Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the Songun System," 53–54.

248 Won-ki Choi, "'Bug-Han Jeon Oe-Gyo-Gwan 'gim-Jeong-Il 70nyeon-Dae-Bu-Teo Bi-Ja-Geum Jo-Seong'" ["Former North Korean Diplomat Says 'Kim Jong-Il Had Created Secret Funds from the 1970s'"], VOA, May 1, 2013, https://www.voakorea.com/a/1652323.html.

249 Gap-jae Cho, "Dal-Leo-Lo Dol-a-Ga-Neun-Gim-Jeong-Il Gung-Jeong-Gyeong-Je-Ui Nae-Mag" ["The Inside Story of Kim Jong-Il's Economy Operated by Dollar"], *Monthly Chosun*, March 2003, http://monthly.chosun.com/client/news/viw.asp?ctcd=&nNewsNumb=200803100078.

250 Cho, "Dal-Leo-Lo Dol-a-Ga-Neun-Gim-Jeong-Il Gung-Jeong-Gyeong-Je-Ui Nae-Mag" ["The Inside Story of Kim Jong-Il's Economy Operated by Dollar"]; Won-ki Choi, "House Intelligence Committee 'Kim Jong-Il's Personal Property Is $4 Billion'" ["Mi Ha-Won Jeong-Bo-Wi 'Gim-Jeong-Il Gae-in-Jae-San 40eog Dal-Leo'"], *Jungang Ilbo*, October 18, 2006, https://news.joins.com/article/2479002.

supports this analysis.[251] As such, while implementing campaigns of "eat twice a day" and "skip meals one day a month" for starving North Korean people, Kim Jong-il seems to have used the hard currency that he earned directly or indirectly through the nuclear weapons program to legitimize his regime by gift politics.

In terms of politics, the nuclear weapons program seems to have served as a useful pretext for legitimizing the Kim Jong-il regime. Although Kim Jong-il seems to have legitimized his regime within the leadership class by conducting numerous purges and replacing of officials after he took power, it would have been difficult to gain legitimacy for the regime from the North Korean people who had been suffering endless starvation. At the same time, Kim Jong-il was painfully aware that he was "much more likely to be overthrown by … discontented citizens than by a foreign power."[252] Accordingly, Kim Jong-il seems to have pursued a strategy to shift the responsibility for the suffering to another target.

Thus, North Korea seems to have preserved the regime's legitimacy by confronting the imperialist United States through its development of nuclear weapons and shifting the blame for its economic crisis to the United States, thereby silencing people's discontent and turning their attention elsewhere.[253] This basis of legitimization is clear in the New

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[251] Choi, "Bug-Han Jeon Oe-Gyo-Gwan 'gim-Jeong-Il 70nyeon-Dae-Bu-Teo Bi-Ja-Geum Jo-Seong'" ["Former North Korean Diplomat Says 'Kim Jong-Il Had Created Secret Funds from the 1970s'"]; Issac Stone Fish, "Hennessy Responds to the Loss of Its Best Customer," *Foreign Policy*, December 23, 2011, https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/12/23/hennessy-responds-to-the-loss-of-its-best-customer.

[252] Lankov, "Staying Alive,"15.

[253] Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the Songun System," 49.

Year Address in 2007, which was announced after the first nuclear test by North Korea on October 9, 2006[254]:

> [By possessing nuclear weapons,] our army and people became able to break down any enemy's threat of nuclear war and to defend our socialist homeland. … The proud victory of the last year [, the first nuclear test,] showed that it has been reasonable to adhere to the military-first politics even in the worst adversity for more than a decade.[255]

C. THE PREVAILING MOTIVATION

In relation to these explanations for the major motivations behind the policies, the case of sanctioning the BDA highlights how Kim Jong-il's domestic political drivers played a somewhat ***more*** important role in the nuclear weapons program than is commonly recognized. As discussed in Chapter I, a state's motivations for developing nuclear weapons could be based on more than one reason. Based on this idea, so far, this chapter has explained that motivations for the North Korean nuclear weapons program were partly based on Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests. In part, to justify his regime, Kim Jong-il used the nuclear weapons program as a means of funding required for gift politics aimed at North Korean officials and as a useful pretext for shifting the responsibility of the economic crisis onto the outside world by confronting the United States. In this regard, the case of sanctioning the BDA demonstrates that the nuclear weapons program somewhat more depended on Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests.

As a response to U.S. sanctions on the BDA, Kim Jong-il abrogated an agreement guaranteeing the security of North Korea and tried to re-establish its credit in the

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254 In North Korea, according to a publication of the South Korean Ministry of Unification, the New Year Address is a blueprint of management of state affairs, which presents directions for each year's policy implementation, and every year the first task for the North Korean people includes laying flowers on statues or portraits of Kim Il-sung and his son, and studying the New Year Address for the year. Basically, the North Korean people are obliged to listen to the New Year Address, and workers and students are required to submit a report. In addition, materials for studying the New Year Address are distributed to workplaces and villages, and dedicated instructors are deployed to each workplace to ensure people are informed about the New Year Address. See Ministry of Unification, *1995nyeon ~2005nyeon-Gan Bug-Han Sin-Nyeon-Sa Ja-Lyo-Jib* [*North Korean New Year Address from 1995 to 2005*] (Seoul, Korea: Ministry of Unification, 2005), 3, https://lib.uniedu.go.kr/libeka/elec/20181100000000808.pdf.

255 "Bug-Han-Ui Sin-Nyeon-Sa ... Gong-Dong-Sa-Seol Jeon-Mun" ["North Korea's New Year Address ... the Full Text"], *dongA.com*, January 1, 2007, http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20070101/8391210/1.

international financial system by getting back its frozen funds via a U.S. bank. Through the fourth round of the Six Party Talks in September 2005, the parties agreed to provide a security guarantee and normalization of diplomatic relations to North Korea. In return, North Korea decided to "abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and return to the NPT."[256] Despite this, the U.S. Department of the Treasury later designated the BDA as a financial institution of primary money laundering concern, which caused the BDA to freeze $25 million of the North Korean funds.[257] Also, as the U.S. Department of the Treasury officials stated, "some two dozen financial institutions across the globe have voluntarily cut back or terminated their business with North Korea…."[258] In response, North Korea refused to participate in further talks, conducting missile launches and its first underground nuclear test.[259] After that, North Korea demanded the return of its frozen funds via a U.S. bank as the requirement to resume the Six Party Talks.[260]

North Korea's demand to have the frozen funds returned through a U.S. bank shows that, in this case, Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests were somewhat stronger drivers for the nuclear weapons program than his security concerns, which are in the national interest. If the prevailing motivation for Kim Jong-il's nuclear weapons program was to secure nuclear deterrence capability against foreign nuclear threats, it would have been better for him to maintain the ongoing agreement, which provided a security guarantee and removed the necessity of a secure nuclear deterrence capability.

Some suggest that Kim Jong-il lost trust in the United States as a partner for negotiation or that other motivations related to the BDA became somewhat more influential than the U.S. security guarantee. On the other hand, North Korea's demand to get back its

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256 Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

257 As a consequence of the U.S. designation, the BDA "suffered a run on its deposits and was forced into receivership, freezing $25 million of North Korean funds." See Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Sanctioning North Korea: The Political Economy of Denuclearization and Proliferation," *Asian Survey* 50, no. 3 (2010): 565, https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2010.50.3.539.

258 Rennack, *North Korea Economic Sanctions*, 29.

259 Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

260 "U.S., Chinese Leaders Discuss North Korea," Nuclear Threat Initiative, May 10, 2007, https://www.nti.org/gsn/article/us-chinese-leaders-discuss-north-korea.

frozen funds via a U.S. bank appears to put more importance on recovering its credibility rather than on re-establishing trust. In other words, Kim Jong-il seems to have tried to regain credibility in the international financial system by getting back those frozen funds via a U.S. bank.[261] By doing so, to fund his gift politics,[262] Kim Jong-il could secure a means for receiving money earned from clandestine activities, such as ballistic missile exports to the Middle East, which generated as much as $580 million in a year.[263]

The case demonstrates that, with regard to the North Korean nuclear weapons program, Kim Jong-il valued his domestic political interests more than the national interest, indicating that domestic politics was a somewhat more important driver for nuclear weapons development. The security perspective assumes that Kim Jong-il was a unitary actor and could act on behalf of the national interest, given that he monopolized power. In fact, Kim Jong-il could have achieved the national interest to alleviate external nuclear threats by maintaining the existing agreement, which would guarantee the security of North Korea. By contrast, the domestic political perspective assumes that, although Kim Jong-il monopolized power, North Korea was a complex system with many compelling internal factors, and, in this regard, his interests might not have matched the national interests. From this point of view, Kim Jong-il primarily sought to secure funds required for gift politics, a means for justifying his regime, by the lifting of sanctions on the BDA. In this context, Kim Jong-il's choice to abrogate the existing agreement shows that he was more strongly influenced by his domestic political interests. Thus, with regard to motivations for the North Korean nuclear weapons development, the case demonstrates that domestic politics were somewhat more influential than security concerns at the time.

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261 Raphael Perl and Dick K. Nanto, *North Korean Crime-for-Profit Activities*, CRS Report No. RL33885 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013), 8, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a464834.pdf.

262 Kim Kwang-jin, a North Korean defector who worked at the party's 39th office known as the management unit of Kim Jong-il's secret fund, explains that most of the foreign currency deposited through the BDA was used for Kim Jong-il's gift politics. See, Cho, "Dal-Leo-Lo Dol-a-Ga-Neun-Gim-Jeong-Il Gung-Jeong-Gyeong-Je-Ui Nae-Mag" ["The Inside Story of Kim Jong-Il's Economy Operated by Dollar"].

263 Perl and Nanto, *North Korean Crime-for-Profit Activities*, 2.

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter has described a limitation of the explanation for the motivations behind North Korea's policies from the security perspective and demonstrated that Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests were a prevailing motivation for military-first politics and North Korean nuclear weapons development. The security perspective has a limitation in that some policies during the Kim Jong-il era cannot be explained well based on North Korea's national interest. Even though Kim Jong-il monopolized power in North Korea, his interests often did not coincide with North Korea's national interests. In other words, North Korea does not fit into the RAM in that it does not represent a unitary actor and, as a complex system, has influential internal factors. In this regard, during the 1990s, there were domestic political forces at work—the collapse of socialism, the sudden death of Kim Il-sung, and natural disasters—and Kim Jong-il's words and writings are indicative of his domestic political interests related to those crises.

Therefore, based on this idea, the domestic political perspective provides an essential element to explain Kim Jong-il's motives for pursuing military-first politics and the nuclear weapons program. Kim Jong-il sought to build a power base, manage the economic crisis, and strengthen control over the movement and thoughts of the North Korean people by military-first politics. Also, Kim Jong-il used the nuclear weapons program as a reliable source of income and a useful pretext for legitimizing his regime. Especially, North Korea's response to the U.S. sanction on the BDA exposes how Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests were at times the prevailing motivation for the nuclear weapons program.

IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the motivations behind North Korea's major policies during the Kim Jong-il era—military-first politics and the development nuclear weapons— from the Agreed Framework in 1994 to the end of the Six Party Talks in 2009. The thesis examined these motivations from the security and domestic political perspectives and, especially, considered how environmental changes at home and abroad affected those motivations. The thesis argues that domestic politics ultimately became the prevailing motivation for the North Korean nuclear weapons program due to changes in the political, economic, and social environment at home and abroad during the period.

To test and support the argument, Chapter II adopted the security perspective, which assumed that Kim Jong-il could act on behalf of North Korea's national interests as the unitary actor who monopolized power under the supreme leader system. This chapter showed there is indeed evidence that he developed nuclear weapons mainly to address the national interest of survival in the face of foreign threats, but there is also evidence inconsistent with that explanation.

Subsequently, Chapter III adopted the domestic political perspective, using it to explain how Kim Jong-il largely tried to justify his regime and satisfy other powerful interests through the nuclear weapons program. This chapter showed how the domestic political perspectives fill in the limitations identified in explanations for North Korean policies from the security perspective, explaining that some of Kim Jong-il's policies were unrelated or even contradictory to North Korea's national interests because those policies were mainly related to his domestic political incentives.

The thesis concludes with a summary of the findings, implications, and limitations of the research, and offers suggestions for future research. This chapter explains key findings and implications inferred from the research. It then discusses limitations of the research and suggests directions for future researches to overcome these limitations.

A. FINDINGS

Through the process of testing the hypothesis, the thesis identifies two important findings on North Korea's motivations for developing nuclear weapons.

1. The Prevailing Motivation

From the Agreed Framework in 1994 to the end of Six-Party Talks in 2009, political, economic, and social changes impacting North Korea at home and abroad shaped Kim Jong-il's domestic political motivations for developing nuclear weapons and played a somewhat more important role than North Korea's security concerns. During the period studied, North Korea suffered domestic political crises due to those changes, including the legitimation crisis of socialism and the loss of economic support after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leadership crisis due to the sudden death of Kim Il-sung, and the famine caused by consecutive natural disasters. These crises raised questions about the legitimacy of socialism and the Kim Jong-il regime, and, as a response, he utilized the nuclear weapons program to justify the regime to some extent.

To be specific, a large portion of the hard currency earned from exports of nuclear and missile technologies obtained in the course of developing nuclear weapons were used as funds for Kim Jong-il's gift politics to ensure the legitimacy of the regime among officials. Kim Jong-il offered luxury vehicles and a generous supply of expensive cognac to officials to maintain their loyalty to the regime, even while directing campaigns at the North Korean people to promote their willingness to forego meals as a way to overcome the famine. Also, he tried to placate the people's discontent with the regime by shifting the responsibility for their hardships onto outside threats, which drove confronting the United States with the nuclear weapons program. Moreover, the case of the U.S sanction on the BDA in 2005 demonstrates that the nuclear weapons program was largely influenced by Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests at the time. The case shows that the development of nuclear weapons at least sometimes mainly focused on securing funds needed to justify the regime through gift politics rather than the ensuring the security of North Korea.

2. "Multicausality" of Motivations

As Sagan and several other scholars argue, Kim Jong-il's security concerns and domestic political motivations worked simultaneously (multicausality) in determining the development of nuclear weapons. Although Kim Jong-il's domestic political interests were the prevailing motivations for the nuclear weapons program at the time, his security concerns also played a major role in his decision to develop nuclear weapons. At the time, North Korea faced huge changes in the security environment, including the reduction of military aid after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the successful implementation of South Korea's northern politics to normalize its relationship with socialist countries and the growing capabilities of its conventional forces, and the continuation of U.S. hardline policy toward North Korea. Under these changes in the security environment, North Korea developed the nuclear weapons program in part to seek survival in the self-help international system. In response to growing security threats from the United States and South Korea, North Korea sought to protect its sovereignty and national security by securing a nuclear deterrence capability by acquiring and developing nuclear weapons, which have enormous destructive power.

Thus, Sagan's concept of multicausality of nuclear weapons development is a helpful construct to explain the motivations behind North Korea's nuclear weapons program from 1994 to 2009. This thesis advances understanding of North Korean behavior by demonstrating how domestic political factors were a prevailing motivation throughout this period. At the same time, the analysis of this thesis demonstrates that appreciating the multiple causes of nuclear weapons development can be necessary for a complete explanation.

B. IMPLICATION

The findings of this thesis have an important implication for policies by the international community to restrain nuclear weapons proliferation. Specifically, with regard to those findings, in order to achieve desired outcomes from the international community's efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is important to consider the "multicausality" of motivations.

During the Agreed Framework, the international community's efforts to denuclearize North Korea mainly focused on providing infrastructure for energy production based on the assumption that North Korea attempts to overcome its energy shortage by the nuclear program. Subsequently, during the Six Party Talks, the international community focused its efforts on guaranteeing the security of North Korea based on the assumption that North Korea pursues a nuclear deterrence capability to protect its sovereignty and national security. As this thesis has demonstrated, however, domestic political factors were also a prevailing and sometimes decisive influence over North Korea's behavior. The international community's efforts to denuclearize North Korea in the 1994-2009 period failed in part because they were based on assumptions about North Korea's motivations that were too simple, overlooking the prevailing role of domestic political factors, especially Kim Jong-il's need to preserve the legitimacy of his rule.

Because nuclear weapons development is often based on several major motivations working at the same time, the international community needs to consider what motivations a proliferation state has at a given point in time in order to stop nuclear proliferation. By doing so, those efforts could reduce a state's overall incentive to develop nuclear weapons, and thus make nuclear weapons unnecessary.

C. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis has limitations in terms of the validity of the assumed rationality of Kim Jong-il and the credibility of data related to North Korea.

In the process of explaining both perspectives, the thesis assumed Kim Jong-il's behavior was rational. To be specific, the thesis assumed that Kim Jong-il, as the unitary actor, would make decisions rationally with an eye to North Korea's national interests, and, as an actor in the complex system, would make decisions rationally based on his domestic political drivers. These assumptions commonly explain that Kim Jong-il would behave rationally to achieve his objectives, thereby precluding consideration of irrationality.

In this regard, Robert Jervis's study discussing the cognitive limitations of decision makers can raise a question about the validity of this assumption.[264] Studies of irrational decision making suggest that excluding the possibility of irrationality of decision makers may sometimes lead to significant errors. For example, Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman's framing effect demonstrates that the result of decision making depends on how issues are framed.[265]

Also, this thesis, like other studies on North Korea, has a limitation in terms of the credibility of the data on which its analysis is based. So far, the thesis cited data from various research institutes to explain the security perspective and the domestic politics perspective. These materials have problems in terms of credibility in that they are based on the reasoning or speculation of scholars or testimonies from North Korean defectors rather than official data or disclosed information by the North Korean government.

In particular, many major scholars such as Bermudez, Kwon, Oh, and Hassig, and the testimony of North Korean defectors, hold that Kim Jong-il monopolized power and thereby had exclusive decision-making authority under the supreme leader system.[266] Nevertheless, some major scholars, such as McEachern, rely on the analysis of North Korean literature to argue that North Korea's decision making depends on bureaucratic rivalry.[267] Information on this aspect of North Korean internal governmental power balances has a limitation in credibility due to the regime's opacity, and there are issues of representativeness and reliability in that the testimony of North Korean defectors may be fragmentary and involve their political bias.[268] In Chapter III, the account of the role of

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[264] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 67–76.

[265] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Rational Choice and the Framing of Decisions," *The Journal of Business* 59, no. 4 (1986): S272, http://cog.brown.edu/courses/cg195/pdf_files/fall07/Kahneman%26Tversky1986.pdf.

[266] Bermudez, "The Military and the Power-Holding Elite," I-29; Gause, "North Korean Leadership Dynamics and Decision-Making under Kim Jong-Un: A Second Year Assessment," 101–102; Kwon, "State Building in North Korea," 294; Oh and Hassig, *North Korea through the Looking Glass*, 97.

[267] McEachern, *Inside the Red Box: North Korea's Post-Totalitarian Politics*, 215.

[268] Eun-Mee Jeong, "Application and Trend of Researches on North Korean Refugees as a Method of North Korea Studies," *Review of North Korean Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005): 170, http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE01827919.

"gift politics" demonstrates some of the internal power relationships in North Korea. But, due to the limitations of this kind of evidence, the thesis does not evaluate how these relationships function or how much they might limit Kim Jong-il's monopolized power.

D. FUTURE RESEARCH

To compensate for the discussed limitations of the thesis, future research considering North Korea's motives for developing nuclear weapons needs to take into account the possible irrationality of decision makers. From the security perspective, for example, based on Jervis's theory of a decision maker's cognitive limitations, one can examine hostile images of the United States for Kim Jong-il and how the resulting security concerns affected his decision to develop nuclear weapons. Based on Tversky and Kahneman's framing effects, one might investigate how the domestic political consequences of Kim Jong-il's development of nuclear weapons were negatively or positively defined, thereby influencing his decision making.

Furthermore, from the domestic political perspective, future research can make use of any improvements in the evidence related to how the North Korean regime works internally. A better understanding of the domestic relationships of power would enable a more precise evaluation of the balance between national security and domestic political factors in shaping North Korea's decisions on the further development and delivery of nuclear weapons.

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